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AUTHOR Scherer, Jacqueline; Slawski, Edward J., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

The work reported here is the result of a two year field study of an urban desegregated high school. Some of the problems of desegregation research, problems of research in familiar settings, and the theoretical background needed for desegregation research are discussed. The physical structure and environment of control at Pawnee West High School and the neighborhood environment are described. The ecological orientations and educational expectations of Pawnee West High School are examined. The social organization of both time and space at the school is described. The problem and consequences of avoidance are discussed. The building of trust in a biracial high school, including the ideological foundations of concern, is examined. (Author/HC)

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Hard Walls--Soft Walls:

The Social Ecology of an Urban Desegregated High School

Final report of field research funded by the National Institute of Education--
Grant Number 400-76-0010

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Jacqueline Scherer
Oakland University

and

Edward J. Slawski, Jr.
Pawnee Public Schools

(The order of authors is alphabetical and does not represent priority. This report is their joint product and both have contributed equally to the result.)

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During the first year our Graduate Assistant Carolyn James was an important member of the team, and students from Oakland University who assisted us in the work were very important. We wish to particularly acknowledge the assistance of Gordon Robinson, Candace Dana, Julliet Reilly, Bruce Koenisberg, Joyce Herriman, and as well as students enrolled in Professor Don Warren's class. We are also grateful for the comments by colleagues at Oakland University, particularly Professors Warren, Bertocci, Dow and Singer. Professors Robert Fink and Joel Fink actively participated in the research and contributed significantly to our understanding of the phenomena we examined.

This research involved both Black and White researchers: although the principal investigators were both white, black colleagues and assistants participated in every phase of the study from the start, and participated both in field observation and interpretations.

Last - but certainly not least - we wish to acknowledge the support of The National Institute of Education, and particularly Ray Rist and Ron Henderson, who made this study possible.

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The Limits of Ethnography--Background to a Study of an Urban Desegregated High School

Introduction

The work reported here is the result of a two-year field study of an urban desegregated high school. It is indicative of the special problems that arise in doing an ethnography of a "familiar" scene that we start off this report of our research with a disclaimer about what we did not and could not accomplish. In the course of our work in the field we repeatedly encountered evidence of the complex sets of expectations for our research and we found dealing with these expectations at times as difficult as "making sense" of the complex patterns of behavior which we observed. Almost all the people with whom we interacted had an idea of "what we were about" and offered their opinions about what we would "find". These expectations were usually contradictory and often inconsistent and the influence of such expectations in the origin and development of ethnographic hypotheses is worthy of study in itself. Officials in the agency which sponsored us told us alternatively that we would confirm their brightest hopes and the darkest fears about "desegregation" in the schools. Colleagues offered us hypotheses that variously directed us to consider a particular phenomenon as crucial to our understanding the processes of "racial balance" and to disregard it entirely. Our own emerging awareness developing from our immersion in the field situation only complicated matters by periodically tempting us to prematurely conclude we knew what was "going on." Before we proceed to report out data, we will comment on the interplay of these forces on the final outcomes of our research.

As we shall describe in much more detail, our field work was conducted in a "desegregated" public high school. The important point is "desegregation" was expected to be a major focus of the study. By virtue of our accepting

the grant we agreed to perform a piece of "desegregation research." Our training and previous experience qualified us as "experts" in areas which are related to the social policy of "desegregation." Two years of extensive field observations, countless interviews with actors involved and thousands of pages of transcript have caused us to reexamine the directions in which our expertise initially lead us.

Simply stated, we found that "race relations" were a much more important issue at Pawnee West than desegregation. Historically, this school has always been desegregated in the sense that white and black students attended classes together.[1] Pawnee West was regarded as "the black high school"[2] in Pawnee long before the court order required busing and systematic accounting of the ratio of blacks to whites. The desegregation plan did not fundamentally alter the school population.[3] Given the changing racial composition of the town itself the school would probably have reached a racial balance close to the present one without busing. As we will describe, the controversy over district-wide court-ordered busing and the efforts to stimulate concern for equal educational opportunity at every level of the school system did lead to violent confrontations in Pawnee and at Pawnee West. The publicity that surrounded these confrontations obscured the very real changes which had preceeded court-ordered busing. To this day many "old timers" at Pawnee West resent the negative public image with which that publicity saddled their school. They believe that the image is undeserved in the light of the school's

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[1]The first black student graduated from what would become Pawnee West High School in 1900. There was not another black graduate until 1918 and two or three graduated every year after that until the 1940's when the increase in the black population led to larger numbers of black graduates.

[2]Unless otherwise noted in the context, quotation marks will be used to indicate comments or phrases used by actors whom we studied.

[3]The percentage of black students at Pawnee West for the two years immediately preceeding court-ordered busing were 47 percent and 42 percent, respectively. The redrawing of the boundary lines that was part of the busing order actually decreased the proportion of blacks at West to 34 percent.

past achievements and efforts with regard to students of all races. For them, the emphasis on "desegregation" is clearly misplaced. But, secondly, to focus on "desegregation" became increasingly problematic because that concept is so packed up with additional overtones that only indirectly relate to the field site.[1] In particular, we must address the issues concerned with the relationship between the more general "meanings" attached to

[1]Any study which deals with black-white relations in public schools must come to grips with the issue of desegregation. However, any attempt to do just that confronts the scholar with a bewildering complexity. As one author noted:

> . . . the national discourse on school integration exists on many levels and with many sets of untested and unexplicated assumptions. School integration has multiple realities. . . . No single value system or perspective can be so catholic as to encompass all the divergencies inherent in the phenomenon (Rist, 1976:417)

Not only does desegregation have "multiple realities" nationally but even the relatively small community we studied displayed a wide range of opinion on the subject. Part of this report will document those "divergencies."

The moral quality of the topic merely complicates matters for the social scientist. For many there is no doubt where morality lies:

> Equality, then, is the critical issue. It is the moral issue which all critics of desegregation must face. The increase in opposition to desegregation among social scientists and politicians reflects a decline of morality in society. (Poussaint and Lewis, 1976:328)

However, our experience with students, parents and educators of both races tells us that in actual practice the distinctions are not quite as hard and fast and the separation of "moral" from "educational" issues is problematic for participants and practitioners. These issues, entangled from the beginning of the school desegregation era, have become ever more entwined.

> The fact that the desegregation decision (Brown) was intended to foster education seems to have been forgotten. The focus has shifted, instead to balanced racial ratios in public schools. (Willie, 1976:313)

Those of us who are engaged in the study of race relations and related phenomena in public education confront the limits of educational technology whenever we approach the problem of "equality of educational opportunity."

> The basic problem is that we are ignorant as yet of what the necessary ingredients of educational practice or methodology must be to insure equal education. The classroom mix seems to be the most important factor of all, and teacher expectations seem to be as vital as teacher qualifications. (Carter, 1969:83)

the social policy of "desegregation" and how these meanings affected emerging definitions of problems and the eventual analysis of the data. These concerns are as crucial in the area of "desegregation research" as are the traditional methodological problems of field research, such as gaining access, negotiating reciprocal arrangement and protecting informants (see Wilson, 1977 and Burkhart, 1977 for recent discussions of these issues in education settings). Nor do we believe that these issues are directly related to the form of research--ethnographic--since it has been fairly well established that there are major advantages to be obtained from the conduct of ethnographic inquiry in schools (see Goodlad, 1977; and Bohannan, 1968). Rather, the complexities involved in the term "desegregation" bear directly upon the kinds of expectations about research that arise in settings where social policy has occasioned considerable social and political disruption, and where many have been conditioned to research for the purpose of program evaluation. We will discuss both these issues below.

The emerging tradition of "desegregation research"

When the Federal government adopted a social policy with regard to public school desegregation, it created a new market for social science research (Cohen and Weiss, 1976; Crain, 1976). After twenty-five years of using the product some consumers are beginning to wonder if the producers were guilty of false advertising. The early promise of straightforward "solutions" to the very real problems presented by segregation has not been fulfilled. Policy-makers are being forced to become more realistic in their expectations about the relationship between research results and policy decisions in the area of school desegregation. Advocates of desegregation are beginning to deny the value of empirical results for what they claim is essentially a moral issue. Social scientists are also reassessing the importance of their contri-

butions to the resolution of the ongoing debate over this social policy. Recent reviews of the history of "desegregation research" attempt to put the results of this research in perspective and to clarify the role of social research in the formulation of social policy.

The expectation that social research would simply aid policy-makers in decision-making is based upon a fundamental misperception of the nature of social science research and the scientific culture which supports it. Cohen and Weiss (1976) isolate three processes which operate against the straightforward utility of social science research in policy-making. First, they note that "as research on social policy matures, the terms of the problem tend to shift." Increased knowledge leads to the discarding of simplistic views which researchers may initially hold about a problem. The process of "continuing redefinition" of the problems "impedes convergence in scientific opinion", much to the chagrin of policy-makers who would applaud an unambiguous solution. Illustrating this point the authors recount the history of research following the Brown decision. Initially, according to Cohen and Weiss, there was little "evidence" to support the legal conclusions in the judicial opinion that ended "separate but equal" doctrine. But there was a consensus among the majority of the social science community which supported racial mixing of students.[1]

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[1] Crain (1976:345) quotes a survey in 1948 which showed "overwhelming agreeement (among social scientists) that segregation was harmful". There was this level of agreement in the absence of any data demonstrating this harm to be the case. Crain notes:

> In fact there was almost no research on the question, and certainly none that would meet today's standards of scientific evidence.

In the almost twenty-five years since that decision, "evidence" has accumulated at an incredible rate but the consensus has evaporated. This was to be expected, however, since the accumulated information has been "a significant force in redefining and complicating our views of social problems" (Cohen and Weiss, 1976:60).[1] What is problematic with school desegregation today is vastly different from those aspects which drew our attention in the 1950's.

The accumulated data have caused us not only to look at different "problems" but in addition, to look at them in vastly different ways with much more advanced techniques. However, the improved technology has not brought increased clarity to our view. Cohen and Weiss (1976:56) point out that ". . . the improvement of research method tends to increase divergence in the treatment of evidence, and to multiply mystification in the interpretation of findings." Increased expertise of the researchers' methodologies and greater diversification of researchers tend to destroy apparent simplicity and replace it with manifest complexity. The audience competent to evaluate the "evidence" shrinks and the results become progressively out of the reach of policy-makers and interested non-professionals. Although the results of these improved research methodologies are more "valid" in a technical sense they are also more qualified and less susceptible to simple application to social policy issues.[2]

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[1]Crain (1976:345) is less generous with the social science community:

> . . . today when the evidence (such as it is) seems to suggest that desegregation has favorable effects there is more academic opposition to it than there was in 1949. Perhaps this is based on greater scientific knowledge; perhaps it is mere faddishness, but I think it is in part just an expression of opposition to the status quo.

[2]There is also a "methodological conservatism" which is an important part of the "culture of social science" that leads to the acceptance of particular conventions that may not be useful to policy-makers (Crain, 1976:342-3). For example, the .05 level of statistical significance may not clearly indicate which direction a decision-maker should pursue.

Finally, "as research on a social policy matures, the angles of vision multiply" (Cohen and Weiss, 1976:56) with an increasing number of disciplines involving themselves in the quest for solutions. Each discipline brings a particular point-of-view to the problem and often different methodological approaches. The extent of the agreement across disciplines and under different methodologies is not necessarily high. As a result, issues arise about different perspectives which have little to do with the social policy directly.[1]

The unrealistic expectations for policy research almost guarantee that most social science research will fail to meet the evaluative criteria for such research. The motivations under which the research is undertaken and the "culture" which determines how it is accomplished dictate against straightforward policy implications. This is an important point but not one which is necessarily accepted by policy-makers. Our field research brought us face-to-face with the expectations of local policy-makers that there would be some direct correspondence between our "findings" and the educational program at the high school.[2] Despite our best intentions to attempt to provide useful information to the building staff, the pressure of our data may have led us what may seem "far afield" in their eyes.

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[1]Crain (1976:343) notes that although disagreements among social scientists "are interesting and valuable",

> . . . policy-makers have difficulty coping with advice from academics who disagree with one another. If social science cannot provide useful policy advice until academics have exhausted all possible ways of disagreeing, the utility of social science is limited.

[2]In one of our initial contacts with building staff, one member of the staff apologized for not being able to "wait for your research" before making decisions about the building. Another said he was "sorry [we] weren't around two years ago" so that we could have told him how to implement programs that had been necessary at that time.

Desegregation and evaluation research

Desegregation is the mechanism by which schools were expected to provide equality of educational opportunity for black Americans, long a goal among the black community (Kluger, 1975). Desegregation was simple in concept--racial balance in the schools would erase the "inherent inequality" of separation by mixing an appropriate number of white and black students, faculty and staff. In the north, one of the major means to achieve this goal was court-ordered busing. These plans were particularly attacked as means of achieving desegregation because they threatened the cherished notion of the "neighborhood school". Most of the confrontations in the early cases of northern desegregation centered on this issue.[1]

Although "desegregation" was simple in concept, the notion has proven to be extraordinarily complex in practice. As our experience deepened, we became aware that except for some surface similarities across settings that were desegregating, "desegregation" meant substantively different things in different situations (St. John, 1975). The meanings associated with desegregation in any particular place are socially determined within each particular setting and the crucial issue becomes the interpretation of the meanings in each setting. Such interpretations may or may not ultimately reflect back upon policy-making which affects that setting. In our particular setting, the most often asked question of our research was "Is desegregation working?" and that concern is so pervasive that we have concentrated upon the issue at the outset of this paper. Our argument is that an attempt to answer that question would subvert much of our research effort and destroy the value of the detailed information which we collected.

[1]There is some dispute about how separable resistance to busing is from a more general racial prejudice. Kelley (1974) argues from an analysis of the NORC General Survey that these two positions do represent separate dimensions and that opposition to busing it not simply a "cover" for racial prejudice. Erbe (1977) in a research note attacks Kelley's analysis and his findings arguing that these two dimensions are really the same. Analysis of the results of a parent survey done in the district studied seems to indicate that those parents who favor desegregation

The emphasis on some quantifiable, measureable outcome of an educational process is characteristic of the stage of educational research which we are currently experiencing. There is an increasing reliance on "evaluation" of programs, curriculum and instruction, student behavior, and most other aspects of school life. The purpose of evaluation is to allow decision-makers to determine whether the program under examination has in fact "met the objectives" established for the program. The value of such examinations will not be questioned here but the main intent of "evaluation" seems to run counter to our work and the work of most field researchers in the policy area.[1] Evaluation research takes certain outcomes as desirable and in most cases these outcomes are imposed upon the situation rather emerging from within as results of some process going on among the actors. Consequently, field researchers are in the position of observing the extent to which these "imposed" definitions of reality are accepted by local actors but not necessarily whether the imposition of these definitions resulted in "success". It is up to others to determine whether the imposed standards have been met.[2]

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generally also are more likely to approve of the busing program. These data are confounded by a race effect which makes interpretation difficult: Most blacks favor increased contact with other races while most whites do not.

[1]In an effort to increase the credibility of evaluation among policy-makers, attempts are being made to professionalize the role of evaluator by forumulating a code of acceptable behavior. (See Stufflebeam, 1977)

[2]Extreme positions are taken in this regard by proponents of classical experimental design in evaluation research. With regard to evaluation research, these researchers see little value in the uncontrolled variation present among different field studies. They argue that evaluation research will only come into its own when rigorous procedures are applied systematically in several sites. Only in this way will comparative data be developed that are useful in making judgments about policy issues.

The particular circumstances of Pawnee (among which are a high proportion of urban poor and an early northern program to desegregate the schools) have enabled the public schools in Pawnee successfully to compete for large amounts of federal funds. These funds have mainly been in the form of support for various programs. Over the past ten years, the School District has been the recipient of several millions of dollars in grants under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Emergency School Assistance Act, in addition to smaller amounts under other titles. Most of this funding has been accompanied by the requirement that the programs implemented have an evaluation. These large amounts of funding have enabled the District to maintain a twenty person Research and Evaluation staff of its own. These local evaluators are responsible for conducting whatever evaluations are necessary under the requirements of the funding of various programs in addition to assessments of locally developed programs.[1] This capacity enables the District to be self-sufficient with respect to the evaluation requirements to a degree not possible for less fortunate districts which must hire "outside evaluators". The easy availability of the large staff of professional researchers has given evaluation a visibility among other District staff that is unusual for Districts its size. Most teachers have at least one contact with an evaluator each year and a researcher is a frequent participant in planning meetings for District programs. One result of this kind of visibility is an appreciation of and a tolerance for the evaluation role that is uncommon among school personnel. However, the expectations of the typical evaluation role conflict with the realities of the kind of field research we were conducting. It was not and could not be our purpose to collect information that would determine how well or poorly the staff at Pawnee West was doing its job.

[1]We note that the District has a reputation for "borrowing" soft money people for local projects. As a member of the Research and Evaluation Staff, one of the authors directly experienced the pressures to "borrow time" from a "soft money" project to support a District activity. We add, however, that such pressure was informal and we never experienced any overt indication that our work was not as important as the other work of the department and that our work "could wait."

This point can be made in a slightly different way by noting with Geertz (1973:22) that the "locus of study is not the object of study." With regard to field research in general, he notes that field researches study <u>in</u> particular places but not <u>the places themselves</u>. We studied <u>in</u> a desegregated school but we have not necessarily studied desegregation. Indeed, in our attempt to make sense of our data we discovered that much of what goes on in our field site has little to do with the effort to desegregate the schools in Pawnee and would have gone on even if there had not been court-ordered busing. In evaluation research, the setting itself is crucial to the study of effects and the attempt is to so control conditions that the specific impacts of the desegregation process in that site could be determined. An outcome (a "finding") that desegregation had "no effect" would be tolerable under an evaluation research strategy, assuming proper techniques had been correctly applied. Given our interpretation of the culture of the school we studied, such a narrow focus on the specific impact of desegregation would be unrewarding and misleading. Again Geertz (1973:23) tells us "where an interpretation comes from does not determine where it can be impelled to go".

Our purpose is not simple observation of behavior but "understanding" the meanings of the behavior we observe. Rosalie Wax (1971:10-11) describes what we mean by "understanding".

> Understanding . . . does not refer to a mysterious empathy between human beings. Nor does it refer to an intuitive or rationalistic ascription of motivations. Instead, it is a social phenomenon--a phenomenon of <u>shared</u> meanings. (Emphasis in the original.)

Our attempt to get at these "shared meanings" is similar to what Clifford Geertz (1973:5-10) calls "thick description" in which, using our field notes as "our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to," we sort out "the structures of significance" in the patterns we observe. Our responsibility is to make sense of the social action which we painstakingly record. This process is essentially "open-ended" and succeeds "to the degree

(we are) able to clarify what goes on . . ., to reduce puzzlement." That is the task we set for ourselves in approaching the field work and in organizing the report of those data. The correspondence of this result to social policy is beyond our scope; it is for others to determine whether the "sense" we made out of the flow of social action in this one desegregated school is relevant to the broader course of desegregation. It will also be for others to decide if our "understandings" clarify the workings of Pawnee West in any useful way. In other words, we have chosen to address the question "what is a desegregated school really like" rather than "is desegregation working."

Some considerations of field research in familiar settings

The research we are reporting was conducted in an American public high school. One of the investigators was an employee of the school district where the high school was located and both were known to many of the actors at the site before the research began. The investigators shared a common language with the majority of actors in the high school and, in certain areas, we shared common perspectives. In short, we knew a good deal about Pawnee West before we ever started our formal observations and the subjects knew quite a bit about us. There were both advantages and disadvantages to this situation. The conduct of our inquiry and the reporting of the results reflect these considerations.[1]

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[1] Karabel and Halsey (1977:77) conclude their perceptive review and interpretation of educational research with a statement of the paramount importance of understanding the "social context" in which the research was done for understanding the directions of the research, both theoretically and methodologically.

> The educational researcher, in short, cannot fully liberate himself from his social context. His realistic hope, and his duty to the best traditions of his calling is to achieve greater awareness of the social character of his activity and thereby to attenuate the limitations of his social position.

We believe that those who read this report will find it useful for understanding the eclectic approach which we have adopted by providing some background information about the researchers which explains many of our data collection and analysis strategies and theoretical perspectives.

Scherer studied participant observation techniques under Blanche Geer at Syracuse University and participated in graduate seminars when Irwin Deutcher began his critical questioning of the validity in social research that culminated in his important essay on "Words and Deeds". She worked as a research associate in London at the Institute of Education at the time Basil Bernstein's work on "linguistic codes" was becoming well-known. Her years in England exposed her to the work of the "new sociology of education" which Karabel and Halsey suggest has been preoccupied with classroom interaction and the social construction of curriculum. Scherer's major interests include community studies. Throughout the course of the field work, she has been sensitive to the broader community impact of the high school program and the interrelationships between the school and its community.

Slawski learned observation and interviewing skills in his work on an Inpatient Psychiatric Service at the University of Chicago Hospitals and in graduate work with George McCall at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. His skills in quantative methodology were acquired under Duncan MacRae at the University of Chicago and John W. C. Johnstone at Illinois.

All social science researchers confront the danger of destroying what they are studying in the process of studying it--subjects of our research are able to modify their behavior as the result of our discoveries or their perceptions of our discoveries. This reflexive quality does not plague researchers in the natural science. Field research intensifies the problem because of the constant presence of the researchers and the extended interactions between them and subjects. We want to be assured that what we are seeing is "really there" and not a response to our presence. However as great as these problems may be, there are other dimensions of the responsibilities of field researchers which extend beyond the completion of the field work. The relatively easy access which members of the field site have to reports of the research and the disparity between the perceptions of the researchers and the beliefs of the actors often engender hostility to research (see, for example, Vidich and others, 1964).

He participated as co-principal investigator in several large-scale survey research studies, including a national survey of journalists at the National Opinion Research Corporation and an extensive evaluation of the Chicago Model Cities Program done through the Survey Research Lab at the University of Illinois. Slawski's areas of interest include organizational theory and the developing area of communications.

We worked together for several years at Oakland University and collaborated on studies of the utilization of volunteer services and the problems facing older students transferring into university. Slawski had served as a consultant to the Pawnee Public Schools for one year while teaching at Oakland, advising on the design and analysis of attitude surveys done in conjunction with the desegregation plan. In 1975, after a six month leave, he joined the staff of the Research and Evaluation Department of the Pawnee Schools as the Supervisor of Research Services for the District.

Our backgrounds help explain why we adopted a variety of methodological approaches to this research, ranging from totally unstructured field observations to systematic opinion sampling; why we utilize achievement test scores and newspapers clippings. Although we are fascinated with developing new interpretative paradigms to explain the enormous complexity of the processes we observed, we felt we also had some obligation to present our understandings in a useful, simple manner. If those people in the school district who wish to make some modifications in the school system can find our ideas practical, we would like our ideas to be accessible to them.

We also encountered several personal limitations in our backgrounds. Neither of us were specialists in race relations or stratification theory. We both had serious difficulties with time due to other commitments--a common enough problem for researchers, but one which does not fit the ideal anthropological model of the ethnographer living within the group completely for some period of time. Finally, we were both white and were confronted with the serious difficulty of studying a highly polarized bi-racial setting. The assistance of a black research assistant for most of the project and the cooperation of several black informants helped us overcome this last difficulty.

This hostility may effectively destroy the site for any future investigation. The chances of such an outcome were particularly high at Pawneee West because of the intensely negative publicity that surrounded the violence of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Many people at Pawneee West were determined not to allow themselves to be put into vulnerable positions as the result of another "outside" examination. In our initial contact with one of the officials of the school this point was clearly made.

> I don't want TV cameras from [the nearby large city] out in front of Pawnee West . . . You'll have to get your publicity at someone else's expense.

This apprehension was tempered by what consistently appeared to be a sincere desire on the part of many actors to benefit from "constructive criticism" of their work. One school official freely stated that he wished that we had been "around last year when things were really bad" so that we could have "helped in planning ways to make things better".[1] In the face of this kind of ambivalence toward our research, we decided to conduct the field work and to attempt to report the results of that work in ways that would maximize the utility of our data for local decision-makers and would minimize the danger of damaging the field site and of destroying its availability for future research. We believe that Pawnee West is an extraordinarily useful and interesting context for the investigation of many school-related concerns, including desegregation, as well as an arena in which to address the complex problems involved in providing valid scientific information in a form useful to policy-makers.

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[1] Another staff member with whom we had frequent contact and who became one of our chief informants said that he was willing to make time in his busy schedule to meet with us because he "enjoyed batting around ideas with people outside the school". He reported having too little opportunity to discuss things in the regular course of his work. The "talks" gave him a chance "to look at things a little differently".

The special problems associated with the apparently contradictory demands of theoretical and practical utility while doing field work in a familiar setting arose at various stages of the field work. The shape of the issues that would become problematic were indicated in our first "official" field contact. In an interview with two building administrators early in the field work, there are hints of the complex set of expectations which the actors on the site had for the research and the researchers and the problems we would ultimately face in meeting these expections.[1]

E: Do you understand what it is we are going to be doing here?
P: Refresh my memory, Ed. It's been four months since we had our conversation about the grant.
E: You have seen the proposals?
R: No. I don't recall seeing them all. (Discussion of where the papers are. E. promises to send copies of all documents to P.)
E. Well, basically we are interested in what happens to kids in school when they get here, how they make friends, which ones talk to each other, who are integrated and who are isolated. You understand that this is a field study, it is relatively unstructured, that we basically observe and see what happens.
N: Well, I always wonder what use this [research] will be?
E: Probably we won't find anything new and startling but we'll basically get evidence to support or reject our own experience in this situation. Our first task is to provide a description of what is going on.
J: As you know better than we do, we really don't know how much change can take place in ninth grade, whether or not the kids are already fixed in their attitudes and positions and we'd like to understand just how much change can occur.
N: I don't expect very much. They're pretty well set.
E: An important part of this is confidentiality. The funding agency is very concerned that the identity of the students is kept anonymous and that even the field site--Pawnee West--is not known.
P: How far does this extend?
J: Just to the point of protecting the subjects. For example there has been no notice of the grant released. R and E might like to announce this because it is quite a distinction--only six grants given out in the U. S.
P: Well, I don't know about annoucements. I don't want TV cameras from [the nearby large city] out in front of Pawnee West. . . . You'll have to get you publicity at someone else's expense.
E: If you would prefer that the awarding of the grant not be announced, that's entirely up to you. Of course, you realize that we have promised the [funding agency] that Pawnee West will never be identified in any of our reports as the site of the research nor will the names of any given individual students be used.

[1]This conversation is reconstruction from the field notes of both the researchers who were present. E and J refer to Slawski and Scherer; P and N refer to the respondents.

J: What this also means is that if we find information from some of the students that we cannot reveal the sources of our information or in any way give this information to you directly.

E: However, you should be aware that we have built into the proposal a long period, approximately six months, in which we give reports to you and the rest of the staff at Pawnee West, in other words, we promised [the funding agency] that we will diffuse the information and be sure that you obtain it.

P: Oh, that's very good. I really don't expect you to find too much new and I have a feeling that what you find we already know.[1]

E: That's true and I'm sure that you are right that because of your experiences you probably have a great many assumptions about certain matters and what our research will do will support or lead to a questioning of those assumptions. In most cases, it will probably document what you know already. But you'd be surprised if in a few cases we have different information.

P: Well, I would be less than candid with you if I didn't state that we won't be able to wait for your findings before we take some action. Last year the placing of the ninth grade in the high school caused a great many problems. It just wasn't too successful and this year we are going to take the steps to intervene before we get into that serious kind of problem.

E: What kinds of problems happened last year?

N: Well, take for example, the issue of attendance. If a student missed more than fifteen unexcused days of classes we no longer talk about "truant". We call him "incorrigible" and, I forget the exact figures, but I think out of 825 students there were almost 290 last year whom were termed incorrigible. I do know for a fact that I saw all but seven of the ninth graders on some matter during the course of the year, and that's a great many students to remember.

P: Yes. We know, for example, that we have a lot of people who never come to class. We don't know how many but we have quite a few.

N: Yes, one of the interesting things last year is I'd be in my office and I'd see the school buses arrive and kids take off across the fields and then at one o'clock when the school buses were loading up the same kids would come back across the field and get on the school bus. They had never been in school all day and what they did we don't know, we can only imagine. They weren't in their classes.

Our purpose in requesting this meeting with the building staff had been to deliver our "spiel" and to strike a "bargain" that would allow us access. What we quoted above is the total of our discussion about entry. After the rather brief comment about publicity and our somewhat self-conscious effort to describe

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[1]To this point, we have shared very little information with the people at Pawnee West. This results from a changed emphasis on the part of the funding agency away from dissemination, lack of interest among building staff and our difficulty in "making sense" of life at West. Our current plan is to provide a brief "fact sheet" to the staff and follow up with discussions if they are requested.

what we expected to find, the staff members were ready to "get down to business." They were not particularly optimistic about the results of our work but if we didn't "make trouble what harm would come from "having us hang around" for two years. The fact that one of the researchers was a "fellow administrator" probably helped assuage any doubts which may have lingered.

In our initial presentation to the actors at the field site we were confronted with the conflict between our perceptions of our role as researchers and the actors' perceptions of us as "fellow educators" which ran through most of our field work. From the outset, we were assumed to share certain common perceptions about the nature of the task in which they were involved. It is not surprising that there were features of their "everyday life" which were problematic for us but unquestionned by them. However, we found it increasingly difficult to maintain the distinction between what Hansen (1976) talks about in terms of "front stage" and "back stage" behaviors.[1] For example, in the interview recorded above, the rather frank discussion of the problems associated with the entry of the ninth grade has more the quality of "backstage" than of "front stage". As "insiders" we would be able to understand and appreciate how difficult dealing with ninth graders was without revealing to the uninitiated the extent of the difficulty. Our stance as investigators did indeed lead us to agree that the incorporation of the ninth grade was difficult and we found that the procedures that were instituted to deal with the problems "made sense". But we came to see these problems as not distinct from the more general problems of

[1]Following Goffman, Hansen (1976:126) distinguishes "two vantage points of observation":

> "Front stage" is behavior that group participants engage in for "public" benefit, the ways of being and doing and thinking that they wish observers to perceive as characteristic of them. Often this entails a playing down of disagreement, hostility, and conflict of interest among group members in favor of a more united image. "Backatage" the cooperative effort at image maintenance relaxes and the rockier terrain of everyday life, complete with bickering, violation of traditional or ideal rules of behavior, and other human weaknesses, dominates the scene.

the community of Pawnee and the entire operation of the high school. Although for actors in the building it was a "ninth grade problem", for us it was a Pawnee problem. Our original working focus on ninth graders and their problems of adaptation to "high school" had defined much information that we gained as secondary or merely background to our main interest. As we broadened our focus this information suddenly became central to our understanding of life at Pawnee West.

Privacy of subjects -- protecting informants

The specific problem posed by our shift in emphasis can be seen in the necessity to protect the privacy of our subjects.[1] The protection of "rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studied" is difficult in studies of small closed societies (see Harrell-Bond, 1976; Hansen, 1976; and Chrisman, 1976). Pawnee West was like a small, closed society. By expanding the focus of the research, we also changed our definition of "subject". Instead of collecting data solely on some 900 anonymous freshmen, we became interested in developing informants among the staff at Pawnee West. These individuals were from groups which were not nearly so numerous and "disguises" were more difficult. Moreover, we were never confident that our informants were aware that we were collecting data when we were not specifically discussing ninth graders. Although we spoke of our more general interests repeatedly, the response was often a joking one.[2]

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[1]The Statements on Ethics adopted by the American Anthropological Association include this provision:

> 1.a Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, it is axiomatic that the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studied must be safeguarded. (Reprinted in Rynkiewich & Spradley, 1976:183)

[2]For example, at a general meeting for all parents in the high school auditiorium when one staff member not directly involved with ninth graders noticed the researcher's presence he began to talk in a stage whisper to other staff members present. His remarks, loud enough to be clearly heard by the researcher (a fact which he seemed to check out by looking repeatedly in the researcher's direction), were that they should "watch what they say" because he "was here and he'll write it all down". The observer felt very uncomfortable about this display and asked the individual what it was about. He replied that "it was just a joke" but the absence was unconvinced.

In the opening interview we stressed we were not nor would be "spies" who would report any questionable activity which we observed. Our concern at that time was focused upon the protection of students. However, as our focus broadened, protection of staff became more problematic.

Our original thinking about the problem of protecting subjects involved the protection of our student informers from the risk of revealing their participation in "illegimate activity" at the school. As we were careful to make clear in the original interview, we would not jeopardize our student informants. However, as it turned out, this conflict never arose.[1] It is generally believed that staff "knows what's going on" in the building and we did not discover any "new facts" about the behavior of students or unearth any unknown (to the staff) perpetrators of illegitmate activity. What we did not appreciate at the beginning of our field work was the extent to which the social system at Pawnee West tolerates "para-delinquent" behavior (Henry, 1971). Students seem to be less "at risk" because of this behavior than school staff and, as our research developed, we became aware of the dangers that might be involved for school staff if our research results were misinterpreted.

In the political and social context of Pawnee, the danger of misinterpretation or misuse of certain data seems especially great. A particular problem is the misuse of events reported in one context as the justification for actions by organizational superiors in other contexts.[2] For example, the streams

[1] On one occasion we feared that our field notes would be subpoened for a court case against West. The parent of a child who had drowned in an accident in the swimming pool threatened to sue. We moved the files out of the country to avoid compromising our informants. To this point, however, no request has been made for our data.

[2] This danger seems slightly more likely now that a majority of the School Board are black. In a recent conference, when the well known result that black males achieve at relatively lower rates than other race and sex groups was reported, the Board displayed more dismay than previously. There are many possible explanations for the increased concern about the achievement of black males in Pawnee. What we note is that the major explanation tends to be in terms of individual staff members who are not "doing their jobs".

of students leaving Pawnee West early in the day we can understand within the broader meaning of time and space which organizes the high school environment. This fact does not so much reflect the effort of any particular individual in the system as it does the operation of the system itself. However, to a School Board member or Central Office Administrator, the interpretation may be more straightforward in terms of some staff members' failure to enforce the attendance policy.

The other professional and personal relationships which the investigators had with actors at the site served to complicate even further the distinction between what data could be reported in the interests of valid science and what data must be concealed to protect the privacy of the subjects. As a member of the Research and Evaluation staff, one investigator had countless contacts with the six administrators and several teachers at West. Many incidents were revealed in the course of these contacts which seem to throw additional light on the operation of the high school. However, this information is often so sensitive and privileged that it cannot be revealed without betraying the source. As an "insider", this investigator had too much information. In the difficult choice between the demands of science and the best interests of our subjects we have decided with Harrell-Bond (1976:119) that the "rights of privacy had to take precedence over the claims of science for well-documented data". Our hope is that this decision both protects the rights of our subjects and preserves Pawnee as a site for the further investigation of the processes we discovered in a context which does not put the subjects at risk.

The element of risk that confronts school administrators was apparent when we presented our findings to the administrative staff at Pawnee West at the conclusion of the field research. The set of events surrounding this presentation illustrate the delicate balance between the sincere desire which school officials have for knowledge of what is going on in their buildings and the complex community environment which they must manage to successfully do their jobs of educating students. We initially presented an overview of the findings to the building principal at West. He decided that the information was important enough to schedule a half-day session with his administrative staff on a scheduled "non-work day" for administrators. This decision meant that the daily school schedule would be disrupted because of the necessity to alter the work schedules of the administrators to make up for this "extra day." The comments of two administrators when they learned when the meeting was scheduled indicated that this was an unusual situation and that the meeting "must really be important."

During the meeting, administrators learned for the first time how the scope of the research had broadened beyond a simple concentration upon the ninth graders. The reactions of administrators was not to question the validity of our conclusions as much as the wisdom of drawing them. Several comments were directed at the anticipated consequences of "somebody who doesn't understand research" misinterpreting" our report. The problem of "misinterpretation" is one which school administrators feel they confront repeatedly in their attempts to do their jobs. An undercurrent at the reporting session seemed to be that the researchers were creating other opportunities for such "misinterpretation."

Theoretical approach and techniques

Our theoretical approach to the research was frankly "sociological". We were looking for "the collective character" of the behaviors we observed. As Becker, Geer and Hughes (1968:129-130) note:

> When we apply the sociological perspective to specific areas of human activity, we invariably find that what had been thought to be matters of individual judgment, motivation, and action have a collective character. . . . Though sociological research always discovers that human action is collective, the discovery always needs to be made anew, for members of one kind of organization usually to not see the underlying similarities between organizations that the sociologist's theory suggest to him. . . . If we ignore the collective character of actions for whose control we are responsible, we can likewise ignore our own complicity in producing those actions. If we locate the responsibility for everything that happens in the individuals we work with, by making everything that happens a function of their attributes--their abilities--or interests or motives--we hide our own contribution to the shaping of what they do. That contribution usually results from well-established patterns of institutional organization in which people acquire vested interest.

We believe that an approach from the "sociological perspective" is especially useful for the site we studied since the actors themselves are committed to a view of "problems" which have their locus in individual behavior. Local educators at all levels of the organization (as well as many numbers of the community) tend to adopt a psychological orientation toward difficulties that arise in the operation of the school. "A few bad kids" are responsible for "all the problems" at Pawnee West; there are too many "parents who don't care about their kids" to have an effective school-community interaction; and, too many teachers "aren't expecting enough from the students" for them to master the "basic skills". We found it difficult to explain that our concern was in understanding--describing, explaining, documenting, tieing pieces of information together, and ultimately,

interpreting--the social interaction at Pawnee West from the perspectives of those in the siutation. Most of the actors expected us to "measure" behavior in some way that would suggest "improvements" in the behavior of individuals. We suspect that the emphasis on "evaluation research" contributes to this expectation. But, whatever those expectations of local actors, our approach focused upon the "collective character" of the actions of actors at the field site and the patterns that this collective character produced among social relations at Pawnee West.

We were unequivocably "research pragmatists" (Schatzman and Strauss:1974) using any method of inquiry that would answer the kinds of questions we needed to answer. The bulk of our effort was in the form of direct observation and interviews with informants or respondents. At times we relied on formal and informal conversations with student leaders, teachers, administrators and other staff. In addition, we used videotape recordings, group discussions and attitude surveys. Moreover analysis of school records, study of newspaper clippings and committee meetings, a content analysis of student year books and student newspapers; life histories; case studies and continuous home visits of a small sample of student families provided helpful information. In short, we agreed with Velditch (1969:6) that "a field study is not a single method gathering a single kind of information."

During the first year, all field work was conducted by the principal investigators and the research assistant. In the second year, we utilized additional data collection resources: three part-time research assistants; eleven undergraduate students auxiliary observers; two clinical psychologists (who interviewed selected groups of students at each grade level at Pawnee West); a professor of education (who videotaped classes and student discussions); and, several public research groups (who studied aspects of Pawnee life that we thought were related to the school). One decision, made reluctantly, was to use an "undercover" observer in two classes for an entire semester. We believe the decision was justified

in light of the data collected from students who "spoke freely" to the young observer as "just another student".[1]

We engaged in "long term" research (Everhart, 1977) by which is meant that we continuously worked with a set of students for a year, observed classes throughout a semester or visited several families regularly.[2] Our aim was to obtain an understanding of the site throughout a sufficient period of time to make our interpretations consistently supported in depth. Since we were committed to both methodological and theoretical pragmatism to meet the demands of the field, and because our research focus was upon understanding Pawnee West as actors in the situation viewed events rather than upon supporting or discarding a particular research hypothesis, we concentrated upon "the natural settings of daily life" (Johnson, 1976). Our task was to describe the interactions we recorded and to interpret these for the purpose of presenting a conceptual whole. We, in effect, adopted anthropological "holism".[3] We had to understand the logic used in the associations at Pawnee West, bringing together the separate bits and pieces of understanding that explained the ways in which individuals, groups and the organization adapted to change, and to present this to several different kinds of audiences.

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[1]The observer attended homeroom and ninth grade general math for the entire Fall semester of 1976-77. He was placed in the classroom with the knowledge and approval of the administration of Pawnee West and the teachers in question. This does not avoid the ethical issues involving deception of the students in those classrooms. However, we have taken every precaution to protect the student subjects.

[2]By "long term field work" Everhart speaks of field work of more than one academic school year and studying in a field setting that is familiar to the researcher since he is studying his own culture.

[3]Anthropological "holism" is an "attempt to come to grips with interlocking variables as they emerge in the context of gathering community and cultural data" (Weaver and White, 1972:117). Originating with an interest in the very complex primitives in urban situations, specialists in "small-scale, intensively oriented methods of investigation", must also find ways to formulate problems and interpret results that are useful in the complex urban society.

Pawnee - A brief description

Pawnee is a medium sized city of 85,000 (1970 census) located on the northern fringe of a major midwestern industrial city. The residents are poor relative to their neighbors in the surrounding affluent county. The presence of three large factories has contributed to the growth pattern of Pawnee by attracting workers from various sections of the country, making Pawnee a town of remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity for its size. At the latest census, the black population is approximately 23,000 (from 3,000 in 1940 and 7,000 at the end of World War II); the Latino population is a mixture of Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican migrants and other Spanish speaking groups and is estimated to represent 10% of the total population of the city. The remaining white population is primarily rural southern and Appalachian white.

In many ways Pawnee is a southern town culturally in contrast to its obvious technological and northern position. Speech patterns as well as food customs suggest the strength of the southern background. This quality of small town influence, is particularly important in everyday interaction among both black and white residents.

Pawnee has experienced considerable loss of whites to nearby affluent suburbs during the past two decades, particularly as new expressways have made the surrounding villages attractive suburban location for residents of the larger industrial city nearby. Urban renewal efforts have left many blocks of empty spaces in the downtown area, and the empty and boarded up shops testify to the commercial strength of suburban shopping centers. However, some positive growth signs are also evident; a new multi-million dollar sports arena has recently been built in the city. This aroused great controversy because of the funds borrowed to build the facility, but also serves as a source of community pride. Another source of pride is the designation of Pawnee as an "All American" city.

The city government consists of a city manager and seven city commissioners, who operated on a budget in excess of 54 million in 1975. Most housing is represented by single family homes. The natural resources of Pawnee include many lakes within the city as well as numerous parks. Crime has been considered a serious problem among residents, but in the past year there is some indication of a slight reduction in serious offenses. Other community facilities include three hospitals, 100 churches, and county offices of many major state and federal units.

The economic recession has taken its toll on Pawnee, and the unemployment rate has hovered around 25% for several months, occasionally soaring to almost one out of three unemployed. The difficulties of Pawnee's industrial plants and the loss of Pawnee's importance as a commercial center are two indicaations of the serious economic problems which face the city. In the 1970 census the average family income of Pawnee was almost $1,000 below the national average, and poverty is a serious problem in the town.

One of the most dramatic changes in Pawnee during the past decade is the number of social settings in which there are mixed black and white contacts. If one observes exchanges in restaurants, stores or entertainment centers, one is struck by the large number of desegregated settings that predominate within the community. This does not mean that the community is desegregated in all dimensions of life, or that problems of racism are missing. It does mean, however, that there are many empirical signs of a lessening of separation between the races and of the development of a more fully bi-racial society.

Desegregation took place during some of the lowest points in Pawnee's historical development. The city was reeling from the effects of white migration to suburbs and black migration into the city; commercial decline due to nearby shopping center expansion and highway developments that by-passed Pawnee; acute housing deterioriation caused partly by poor planning decisions adopted throughout a forty year period; and a sharp rise in social problems.

The bitter busing controversy was aggravated by the small-town atmosphere in which long-standing racial attitudes rose to the surface. But the publicity, the infusion of federal monies, and the political power of black leadership in spite of obstacles contributed to an important transformation in local leadership. By 1970, black voters could not be ignored; federal regulations had to be enforced; and official policies had to be enacted, in spite of "old guard" reluctance to give up influence. Although many examples of political ineptitude on the part of newcomers could be noted throughout Pawnee, by the mid-1970's the signs of more effective political arrangements became clearer. One can now find black representatives in almost all divisions of the city government, although not usually in key policy-making positions. Last June, four black representatives were elected to the School Board constituting the majority. This Board will also select a new school superintendent in June. Federal funds have enabled departments to buy expertise in specific areas; a new city manager is influential in reshaping government policies; crime has been reduced substantially.[1] For the first time one finds expressions of optimism about urban renewal, and a growing confidence that Pawnee can be restored.

In summary, desegregation was introduced into a turbulent social environment in Pawnee characterized by major political, economic and social changes. Desegregation was both a result of those changes, and at the same time, a stimulant for more changes. We shall see that many of the features of Pawnee outlined above seem crucial for understanding the particular high school we studies. We will provide a detailed discription of this high school and its neighborhood in the next chapter.

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[1]Since 1975 the violent crime rate has fallen 32 percent. More specifically; murder declined 60 percent, robbery declined by 10 percent, aggravated assault declined 12 percent, burglary down 26 percent, and motor vehicle theft 25 percent. Only rape and larceny increased, 10 percent and 2 percent respectively.

Chapter II

The Physical Structure and the Environment of Control at Pawnee West High School

The physical space in which an organization is housed influences the way in which the members interact to accomplish the goals of the organization. Available space structures not only the "work" which is accomplished but also how it is accomplished. Sets of rules and expectations are created by the social structure which determine the acceptable behaviors with respect to the space. This phenomenon can be clearly observed in the case of public schools. Much attention is focused on the layout of classrooms, the lighting in the corridors, the equipment in the gymnasium and other features of the school building. These features are considered important in the creation of an "environment which is conducive to learning."

A particular aspect of these structural features that figures prominently in thinking about school construction is the extent to which the building facilitates or impedes "student control." Learning cannot occur in an environment without order and the particular responsibility of the public schools to act in loco parentis demands some measure of limit-setting on student behavior. In those circumstances where the community and the school are in general agreement about the ends of education and the means to achieve those ends, the "control issue" tends to become routine and remain secondary to the broader effort to "teach children." However, in the absence of such consensus, student control can assume a much more important role in structuring the reactions of school staff to students and the community from which they come.

The particular circumstances which surrounded the attempts to reduce the level of discrimination against blacks in various areas of life in Pawnee created considerable ambiguity among the local educators. Faced with mounting

criticism from segments of the community and the disruptions that were part of that criticism, educators were forced to attend more to the issue of control and less to the issues of education. As one Pawnee staff member stated, "I'm not an educator: I'm a policeman." It was in this context that Pawnee's oldest high school moved into a new building. The physical characteristics of that building and the reactions of the community and the professional staff to that structure reflect the turmoil and ambiguity that plagued Pawnee. In this chapter, we will describe the physical characteristics of the high school building and the neighborhood where it was built. In the following chapter, we will detail the complex reactions which residents of Pawnee display toward the new high school.

We became aware of the importance of "control" in Pawnee West early in the course of our observations. A discussion with school officials included a detailed description of the number of keys that were needed to pass from one section of the high school to another. The purpose of the many keys was to lock the doors which sealed off the various sections of the building from students. It was admitted, somewhat sardonically, that this device was effective for teachers but "not necessarily for students."[1] The effort was worthwhile, however, because it helped prevent "vandalism" which destroys school property. There is considerable pride that the level of vandalism is so low in comparison to new buildings in the more affluent neighboring school districts.

> Many visitors [to Pawnee West] are surprised to hear that this is not the first year we have been open and how well things have been kept up.

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[1]For example, one teacher reports her frustration at standing at an outside door with an "armload of books, in the freezing cold" and not being able to get the doors open. A particular problem for this teacher are the handles on the doors which are almost flush with the surface and extremely difficult to grasp, especially when it is cold.

The "up-keep" is even more surprising since all the internal walls at Pawnee are "soft", that is, they do not provide structural support for the building. There have been very few instances where these walls have been damaged, although it would be relatively easy to so. The "hard walls" separate the school from the outside world. We will adopt this hard wall-soft wall distinction in our description of the physical characteristics of Pawnee West.

The interest in control contained in this image of hard and soft walls extends beyond the physical dimensions of regulations. Control is a theme to be found in many situations. Control--or more accurately, efforts to control events and their interpretation--is a dominant theme in many kinds of social situations at West. Black and white parents, at various times during the past ten years, have tried to control school developments; a major share of teacher effort is devoted to controlling student behavior, and students continually attempt to gain some measure of autonomy or self-control over their school experiences. The negotiations over control at Pawnee take place in many different areas, including in classrooms and during extra curricular activities. The issue of control is important in considerations of schedules, lunch hours and the physical location of the building site. The tactics used are also varied and include voting, participation and rhetoric.

Those familiar with American education are not surprised that school desegregation policies were perceived as issues of control by many different publics. The control issue is characteristic of school controversies that have had complex political and historical roots. Desegregation is particularly important because it is a manifestation of larger social issues engulfing this society, involving demands of blacks and other minorities for more control over all aspects of their life experiences. The struggle for control at Pawnee West is but one instance of the larger societal struggles and debates over power, opportunity and freedom that have concerned Americans throughout history.

By developing the theme of control in this account of desegregation we may do some injustice to the complexity of the interaction that occurs at Pawnee West. In many ways a desegregated high school is no different from any other high school in America. Teachers have problems controlling student behavior in the homogeneous social setting of affluent suburbs as well as central cities. Violence is a threat in many areas of American life besides schools. Desegregation made the task of control more complex and more problematic because it highlighted--often distorting--school events involving particular student groups. This encouraged those opposed to desegregation to "blame" desegregation, or more often busing, for the problems of schools. Reflection, however, makes one realize that the problems of Pawnee West are similar to the problems of schools throughout the country. The people we describe are neither villains nor fools; they are serious and educated Americans trying to meet legal demands and to operate an important institution. This is an account of how they tried to make sense of the events surrounding them and to impose some order--or control--these events; and how the decisions to accomplish these goals still affects everyday happenings at Pawnee West.

"Soft walls' and "hiding places"--the geography of social control

For over fifty years Pawnee West High School[1] was housed in a rambling red brick building located on four acres of land about one mile due west of the geographical center of Pawnee. The campus is atop a small rise, fronting on the main east-west traffic artery that divides Pawnee. The old building was a landmark in the community and directions are still given with reference to "old West". Increasing student enrollments and inadequacy of existing facilities demanded expansion. (For example, the old swimming pool was quite small with no room for spectators and the ceiling was so low that "divers had to wear helmets"). Remodeling could not repair the serious structural flaws. Therefore, the School Board decided to construct a new facility to house West. In this section we shall describe these facilities and show how they were constructed to reflect attempts to deal with the community pressures that were emerging in the late 1960's in Pawnee.

The new building which houses Pawnee West is starkly modern in contrast to the traditional appearance of the old high school building which it replaced. It is a low, sprawling, gray concrete structure. On first view, one notices an apparent absence of windows which gives the building what some informants have termed a "prison-like" appearance. In fact, there are windows around the outside walls of the third and fourth levels. However, since very few classrooms are on the outside walls, the absence of windows in the classrooms reinforces this "windowless" impression for those who enter the building. A curved driveway gives access to the front of the high school and parking lots are adjacent to the other three sides.

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[1]Until the second high school was opened in 1958, Pawnee West was known simply as Pawnee High School. Counting the newest, four different buildings have housed Pawnee West at the same location since its founding in 1871.

More recently, the southeastern corner of the campus has been converted into a park and recreation area with tennis courts and a short running track on the site of the old building. The campus has now more than doubled in size with the razing of an apartment complex that stood next to the high school land.[1] The finished appearance of the building project is a modern high school building which is located on an attractive and spacious campus.

The reactions of members of the community to the new building are mixed. They range from admiration to disgust toward the appearance of the facility. Even among those who admire its newness there seems to be a hint of ambivalence. One parent who is very active at Pawnee West commented:

> Well, I'm glad that the sign [saying Pawnee West over the front entrance] and the flagpoles are finally up. You know this is a lovely building but it's hard to tell what it is. People driving along the street [past the front of the school] can't tell whether this is a school or an office building.

This same parent advised the administration to "plant more trees and shrubs around the outside" to make it look less stark. One teacher who has "made her peace" with the new building recalled more negative reactions from the students as they watched the progress of construction from the old building.

> The students were negative. They watched the thing go up from over there [the old building] and it looked like a pile of stones. They called it Alcatraz High.

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[1]The Pawnee West Building and Community Development Project increased the size of West's campus from four to slightly more than nine acres. This was accomplished by the purchase of adjacent land and the demolition of the structures that stood on it. In addition to the apartment complex, several abandoned single family homes were also torn down. These places served as the haven for students who used them for illicit activities when they "skipped school". Abandoned garages and apartments were favorite locations for card playing and doing drugs.

The only remaining building on the campus which is not owned by the school district is a small grocery store. The owners have been waging a battle to remain open despite school and community pressure. Although the store will eventually be shut down, it remains a source of food and "beer and wine" for students during the school day.

The "mixed feelings" which people express about the exterior of the new building become even stronger when the interior layout is discussed.

The original design[1] for the new West building incorporated the notion of the "small school within a school". The traditional "comprehensive high school" was to be divided into smaller organizational units which would share certain common facilities (library, gym, cafeteria, shops, etc.) but which would constitute functionally separate educational units. Each "small school" would have its own core of staff and its own "principal". The relatively small numbers of students in each "school" would permit greater personal attention to the learning needs of individual students. This change, however, was not implemented after the move into new quarters.[2] Nonetheless, building staff at West still talk of the feasibility of instituting such "small schools" to compensate for the "bigness" and "impersonality" of the new high school.[3] As we shall

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[1]We were unable to locate the actual plans for the various proposals for the new building. Informants told us that the present building was a result of the package of compromise that eventually resolved the site selection controversy described elsewhere in this report. However, the extent of design change that was involved in the compromise cannot be determined from our data. We note that certain individuals strongly resent what they see as a "sell out" that sabotaged the "small school" concept. For them, it is all part of a piece of political maneuvering that resulted in students, mainly blacks, being "short-changed" by the system. Others say that there was never much commitment to the "small school" idea anyway and the eventual design was decided mainly in terms of available resources.

[2]Informants tell us that the main reasons why "small schools" cannot be established is that they would require too many additional teachers and administrators and that the district cannot afford the expense. Moreover, a change of such magnitude would require attention to educational issues which the schools have effectively ignored in their attempts to satisfy the community's demand for safety of the students.

[3]Staff who had previously taught at the old West building lament the loss of certain features that made the atmosphere "less formal" and "more personal". Teachers especially seem to have felt the change. In the old building the arrangements were such that informal gatherings among particularly the male faculty were frequent. Informants speak of these gatherings (which took place in "the hole", a basement room by the boiler) serving various functions in the faculty social structure, such as socialization of new members and control of deviants. The move into the new building destroyed these arrangements and the only remains are eating groups of four or five. These are reported to be "a lot different" from the previous situation.

see, the components of the design of the building which would support these smaller educational units present the staff with a "nightmare" in their attempts to control students in the building.

The interior of the new Pawnee West building is organized around a central core which provides the structural support that allows all other interior walls to be "soft", that is, not weight-bearing. In general, the center of the building is reserved for larger rooms with smaller rooms encircling this central core. Except at the very front of the building, there are no rooms on the external walls which accounts for the absence of windows in the classrooms. We will describe each of the levels of the building as background for our discussion of the relationship between the arrangement of the space and the problems of control.

Two imposing banks of doors opening off the circular drive at the front of the building give access to the "main level" of Pawnee West.[1] The "main level" is the third level in the building and houses the administrative offices, the media center (library) and cafeteria facilities as well as classrooms. A wide hallway circles the perimeter of the building. There are additional entry points at each of the two rear corners of the building. The main office complex includes a large reception room which contains the school switchboard, files containing student records and work space for the secretaries.

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[1]The interior design of Pawnee West is deceptive because, despite its "low profile", the structure contains four levels, two of which are below ground level. Several parents report being confused on their initial visits because they tried to "go up" to the second level which was below them. The walls of the stairways which are located at each corner of the building display numerals indicating the level of the building.

A long counter separates the reception space for visitors to the office from the work space used by the secretaries and student assistants. Trophies and other momentos are often in view on the counter top. There is a couch immediately inside the door for visitors to use while waiting to see the principal. A large bulletin board containing announcements and the teachers' mailboxes are also located in the "main office". A series of smaller rooms which serve as offices for administrators, conference rooms and a work room extend off on either side from this large room. The principal's office is at the far end of the complex. It is somewhat larger than the other offices and contains a small circular conference table in addition to the desk and large chair. In a small office directly off the reception room, two police counselors who work for the Pawnee Police Department are housed.

Immediately across the hallway are the offices of the counselors. A large reception area with several chairs and small tables opens off the hall and, at the rear, are a series of small offices where counselors can see students. A glass wall affords a view of this reception area and the glass is usually covered with announcements of scholarships and awards. A secretary serves as a "gatekeeper" for the counseling area.

At the very center of the "main level" are the media center, cafeteria and the commons area. The media center is located in a large high-ceilinged room which gives one a feeling of great spaciousness. The large heating ducts cover the ceiling two floors above are painted a pale shade of purple and lend a touch of color to the gray concrete walls which tower above the book shelves.[1] Small, glass-walled rooms line either side of the room affording

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[1]One black, male teacher told us of his attempt to have students paint pictures of "historical figures" on the huge slabs of concrete that are the library walls. He reports that this idea was rejected because "the administration" thought it would be too dangerous for students to climb the ladders in order to paint the murals.

space for small groups of students to work. We noted that these rooms were generally scheduled for use at most times during the day.[1] Library tables are clustered into two groups in the center of the room separated by a low row of book shelves. We have observed the care which teachers take in maintaining the separation of their classes when they were in the library. The space is organized to facilitate student control.

Large "commons areas" are located on two sides of the media center and extend nearly the entire length of the building. These large "open spaces" were originally intended to serve as eating places for students but since the lunch program was eliminated[2] the area houses student lockers. There are a few tables and chairs where students can congregate before or after class. Since students under the "abbreviated schedule" attend classes from 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., there is little time for students to meet during the school day. The cafeteria facilities, which like the media center, are located between the two commons areas remain generally unused without a lunch program. The space is used mainly as a dispensing station for "snacks" during the half-hours immediately before and after school.

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[1] At one stage of the research we explored using these cubicles to interview students. We found that we were unable to schedule them because they were too often in use. However, we were able to use the faculty room in the library for interviews.

[2] The confrontations that occurred between groups of students during the years immediately before and just after court-ordered busing have made building staff reluctant to tolerate the presence of large groups of students inside Pawnee West. The memory of the earlier confrontations was prominent in discussions of reinstituting the lunch program in the 1977-78 school year under a new state law. Much concern was voiced about the problems involved in "supervising" students during the lunch periods. The feeling of the staff was that they had "just about got things settled down" and there was a fear that it would start all over again.

The basic organization of the school is by grade level. Each grade principal (Assistant Principals in the school organization) has his/her own suite of offices which are located at each of the four corners of "commons area". The ninth grade office is located on the north corner; the tenth grade office is at the southwest corner; the eleventh and twelfth grade principals share an office suite on the northeast corner; and the athletic and attendance office is located at the southeast corner.[1] These offices are of similar layout: large reception rooms with smaller private offices and work rooms. Not all these offices use counters to separate the office staff from people who enter the office for whatever reasons. In the tenth grade office and the offices of the eleventh and twelfth grade principals, the reception areas are open. One additional office complex houses the Assistant Principal in charge of curriculum. This administrator has no direct contact with students and his office does not open onto the "commons area" from which students can easily enter the other offices.

Only a very few classrooms at the front of the building face on an external wall. Most open off the corridor which rings the perimeter toward the inside of the building and, consequently, are windowless. There are small vertical panes in the classroom doors but many teachers cover even these with brightly colored cardboard or pictures, in an apparent attempt to screen out the outside world for the students during class time or from the prying eyes of administrators. The classrooms themselves are simply plain rectagular rooms. All have large wall clocks, bulletin boards, wall

[1] For the first time in the 1977-78 school year, the ninth grade principal will "follow" his class into the tenth grade, that is, this year's tenth grade principal was last year's ninth grade principal. This means that the location of the offices for these two grades have been exchanged. The respective administrators have not moved.

phones, loudspeakers (for morning and afternoon announcements)[1] and brightly colored carpets. Each contains, in addition to several modern student desks, a teacher desk and supply cabinet which can be and usually is locked. Some teachers have managed to appropriate additional tables and chairs. In general, despite the bright colors, the appearance of classrooms is austere.[2]

At the very rear of the main level is a large fieldhouse built for staging athletic events. An attempt to make this facility more useful for athletics has had an unfortunate side effect. The floor of the fieldhouse is a special rubberized surface which cushions the feet of the athletes during competition. However, this surface is especially vulnerable to damage from non-athletic-type shoes. Therefore, use of the fieldhouse for non-athletic events is only possible if the administration is willing to risk damaging the expensive playing surface. That risk is taken for the Homecoming Dance and Christmas activities. A large auditorium is also located on this level. Two large foyers on

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[1]Announcements are broadcast during homeroom soon after the start of school and during fifth period just before the end of the school day. Our observations indicated that students pay little attention to the content of these announcements. Despite the attempts of teachers to get their attention, students treat the time as "free time".

[2]We observed different reactions to the classrooms. Many students are impressed with the newness of the furniture and appointments. However, one student wondered why "they couldn't have spent a little less on the carpeting" so that more money would have been available for sports equipment. The initial reactions when people first moved into the new building were more intense. One staff person recalled:

> It was like going into a restaurant at noon without tables and chairs or silverware with construction still going on and expecting to serve dinner at light. . . [The new building] looked low. People couldn't get used to the pipes hanging out everywhere. . . You couldn't get used to the bare concrete. You wanted to sneak in and paint the walls. Everybody was hanging posters and bringing in plants, hoping that they would survive without sunlight. It was a mess.

either side of the building offer access to the auditorium and serve as smoking areas for the students.[1]

The second level, immediately below the main level, contains the specialized classrooms. Various vocational education shops are on this level; machine shop, print shop, drafting rooms, and sewing room among others. In addition, the band room is on the second level. The athletic department is located on the lowest level of the building. There is an auxiliary gym, swimming pool, paddle ball courts, and locker rooms and showers. The top or fourth level contains mainly classrooms and laboratories.[2] This level is mainly devoted to academic subjects.

Access to the different levels of the building and different areas on the same level is controlled by a series of steel and glass doors. These doors can be locked in crisis situations and are routinely locked when classes are not being held in the building. This practice, although important for protecting the equipment in the building, makes the use of the facilities by other people difficult.[3] A case in point is the Parents

[1] Although smoking is against state law for minors, it was tolerated by building staff in designated areas because it was impossible to elimina te and prevented the bathrooms being taken over for illicit activities. In 1977-78, this toleration has ceased.

[2] Many teachers who taught in old West express disappointment with the quality of the facilities offered in new West. Additional laboratory and classroom space that was promised the teachers as part of the move to the new building as well as new equipment has either not become available or has been preempted for other purposes--mainly housing the ninth graders. The result is less than desirable from a teaching standpoint.

> Store rooms were used. Any place where they could put desks. They stuck up some blackboards and it was a classroom. It's dark and a terrible place to teach. . . . It would be nice to be in a building that didn't leak every time it rained. The water comes in these windows in rivers. It ruins my books. I would like a classroom which wasn't either freezing or roasting. It's hard enough to teach kids without having them falling asleep because they're too hot or too cold.

[3] The concern for security extends beyond the walls of Pawnee West. In the recently completed park area of the campus, the trash cans are chained to the railings that border the stairs and walk ways.

Club at Pawnee West. It is generally agreed that the "changing society" which "puts more demands on people's time" makes it difficult to "sponsor activities that will draw large numbers of parents". However, there is an ongoing interest in sponsoring activities by parents because "when the chips are down, twenty or thirty people can do you a lot of good". But such activities are difficult to maintain when simply getting into the building becomes a problem for those who do come. A leader of the PTA stated:

> The difficulty of getting into the building and parking area are we think some of the reasons why people don't come [to the Parent Club meetings]. We think that if parking were a little easier and it was clearer how to get into the building that we might have more people at these meetings, We think that some people try to get in and are unsuccessful and then go home.

Our own experience supports this view. On one occasion we attended a meeting of the Parent Club which was scheduled for 7:30 P.M. Arriving at Pawnee West at 7:15, we approached the front doors and saw a sign with a big arrow telling us to "Use This Door". We found that the recommended door was locked. Others report similar experiences, as in this conversation between a white parent and a Parent Club recruiter.

> Parent: The parents club meeting is a rip-off. . . I tried seven doors before I was able to get in. I wouldn't come here at night anyway for the meetings. I was dropped off once in front in the circle [driveway] and I couldn't find a door that was open. I felt like melting into the sidewalk. I couldn't get in and I was afraid to go home. I wouldn't dream of walking home from here. I won't go out even if it looks like the sun is going down. So no way was I going to walk home.
> Parent Club Recruiter: Well, we have things going on during the day. Not only that, when we do have meetings at night, there are administrators here to walk you to the car. We've never had any trouble.
> Parent: Look, I want to support this club. I'm willing to pay dues or give money or whatever. It's just that I'm not really interested in attending those meetings because I'm afraid. Look, I'm the biggest chicken in Pawnee.

In this instance, the need to protect the building seems to work against another legitimate aim of the organization. For this parent, the risk of "not getting in" is too great for her to come to the meetings. The "hard walls" outside keep out people so that the "soft walls" remain undamaged.

The concern with safety and social control can be seen in many aspects of the physical layout of Pawnee West. For example, student lavatories have no doors. For both male and female students only a wall perpendicular to the outside hallway provides some privacy; even in these most private places, students are vulnerable to intrusion. There are very few "legitimate" places where students can experience a sense of privacy. However, there are an "almost unlimited number" of places where students may hide. This fact causes teachers and administrators considerable effort. As one teacher told us,

> There are just too many places to hide. You can't be everywhere. . . . It was easier in the old building where you could chase the kids up one staircase and have someone catch them when they tried to come down the other one.

New West has too many staircases to allow the application of so simple a technique. The entire area must be patrolled and regularly. Even then, there is no guarantee that student behavior can be effectively monitored. Teachers have "hall duty" and at appointed times are visible in the halls imposing order. Unfortunately the halls are not "where the action is". The stairwells at the corners of the building abound with "secret places" where illicit activity (for example, "smoking dope") can be carried out with relative impunity.[1] One teacher told us of the problems of "hall duty":

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[1] The stairwells are the scenes of much of the residue of violence in the building. The official position that "fighting is at a standstill" can be supported by the absence of any confrontations between groups of students. (There are occasional "drug wars" which do not count). However, students tell us of many minor skirmishes that take place in the corner stairwells. These may last only thirty seconds but to the students who are victims, it is frightening. This fear may account for the overcrowding of

> You can't see what's going on the stairs from the halls. Yesterday I smelled some pot so I went to look. Just as I got to the door, there was a tremendous bang. I saw smoke coming through the vents. If I had been in there [the stairwell] I would have been deaf. There was a hole burned in the rubber mat. 2.16

Many agree that the traditional techniques for controlling student behavior are ineffective in the new West building. Another staff person saw much more at stake in the failure to control behavior in the school.

> It's like Rome and the provinces. You know after a certain point Rome got too big to control. Well, this building is too big to control. There are too many places to hide. It's not a closed campus any longer. It's just a matter of time before the whole thing explodes. They are drag racing in the parking lot. Some kid's going to get hit. . . . Kids just don't care. You used to be able to threaten them with a grade but nowadays they'll take an E. It doesn't matter to them. . . . There are two teachers watching each floor but that's not enough. I take hall duty just so I can keep in touch with what's going on. I'm telling you that things are going to explode. They have to close the campus. Otherwise. . . .

The memory of the earlier period of violence is forever close to the surface and gives particular meaning to the issue of control in Pawnee West.

The campus is technically "closed" and elaborate gatekeeping procedures are in operation. Students are not supposed to leave the building without permission nor to reenter without seeing some officer of the school. Students can be easily observed leaving West at all times of the day and returning at the end of classes in time "to catch the bus home". Getting out of the building seems to impose few problems for students so inclined. Getting in, however, is more difficult. Monitors are stationed at the doors to "check people in."[1] Those who do not "pass inspection" are taken to the office.

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the central staircases in Pawnee West. Students seem to prefer the pushing and shoving of the "crowds" to being "punched out" on one of the corner stairways. As an attempt to reduce some of the illicit activities which occur on the stairs monitors were chosen among the junior and senior students. Equipped with arm bands, they stood on the landings for a few minutes before and after the breaks between classes. This program was reportedly successful in reducing some of the more blatant activity in those areas.

[1]One incident involved a hall guard who does not confine her activity to monitoring traffic in and out of the building. She is extremely religious and reads a large Bible in her spare time. She has been observed providing "religious" counseling to students on several occasions. Students report mixed reaction to her advice. Also, one of the more noticeable "crimes" occured during the field work when someone stole her Bible. Within a day she had been provided with several replacements. We noticed that this woman displayed a remarkable ability to identify "strangers."

One final feature of the physical layout at West should be noted--the preoccupation with windows. As we noted earlier, most rooms have no views of the exterior of the building. But there are many windows inside the building and windows at West serve as vantage points for observation of activities. In the central core of the structure, hallways bridge the separate wings of the building. Windows line many of these hall-bridges allowing passerbys to peer down on the activity taking place below. This is particularly noticeable with activity in the auxiliary gym in the basement of West. Windows line one wall of a transverse hall on the level above the gym and afford a view of what is going on below. It is common for several students to stand transfixed watching dancing at "sock-hops" or the regular afternoon recreation hours.[1] From their position above, students can observe from a safe distance. A similar phenomenon is observed at events held in the fieldhouse. A line of windows runs across the back of West at a height of about eight feet from ground level. Every event in the fieldhouse draws spectators at these windows whose heads only can be seen from within. Turns are taken supporting each other on their shoulders so they can watch. The position of an outsider looking in seems common at West.

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[1]An afternoon recreation program was sponsored after school during the first year of our field work. It seemed to us to be successful in drawing students who had no other basic interest in school. In the second year it was discontinued because bus schedules could not be arranged and there were too few teacher volunteers to supervise the activity. Their difficulties reduced to a lack of finances. A member of the staff of the athletic department lamented the fact that one administrator's salary could not be spent for athletics because he could "run a good program with $30,000."

The neighborhood environment of Pawnee West

The new Pawnee West building was designed so that the only rigid divisions of space are the outside walls--all other walls could be rearranged. Symbolically, the choice of this design is not insignificant. Pawnee West is the only new construction in an area of what is feared to be imminent decline. Immediately to the west of the school is a predominantly white, but integrated, middle-class area which retains its reputation as "the best neighborhood in Pawnee" and immediately to the south is Pawnee's "ghetto" which most people agree is "one of the worst neighborhoods" in town. The awareness of the closeness of an area of serious poverty and decay and the fear that middle-class areas may not withstand encroachment "from the south" may help in understanding the necessity of "hard walls" in the design of Pawnee West. In this section we shall describe the characteristics of the neighborhoods that surround West High School.

The south side of Pawnee was historically the haven for new arrivals to Pawnee. It is the oldest section of the city and the houses are of modest proportions. Originally the southeast section contained foreign-born and the southwest area was the home of Pawnee's black population. Patterns of residential segregation were clear and blacks were aware of the "invisible barriers" that separated them from their white fellow citizens. One longtime black resident recalls:

> Black people lived in the only areas of the city they could. They were sort of closed in by invisible barriers. Until after the war [World War II] no blacks lived north of Brown Road and none lived east of Syracuse [these streets define the southwest quadrant of Pawnee]. Many lived in public housing projects that the government had built. Some of this housing was barracks-type like they had in the army. Some of the housing was small homes with two bedrooms. Many of these homes were made of wood, others of brick, and a few of stucco.

The decades of the 1940's and 1950's saw large numbers of southern whites and blacks migrating north to work in the town's industrial plants.[1] This migration put even more pressure on the limited housing stock and the ability of the established patterns of residential segregation to contain the black population.

The decade of the 1940's saw Pawnee begin to pay for the decisions that the city fathers had made twenty years earlier. These decisions had effectively limited the Pawnee's opportunity to expand and made responding to the influx of new population very difficult. Unlike most other cities

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[1] Pawnee is basically a one industry city which contains three large plants. The population increases in Pawnee have historically been tied to the economic conditions in the industry which provides its economic base. This industrial base was established early in this century and the first waves of in-migration were white. It was not until after 1940, however, that large numbers of blacks moved into Pawnee in response to recruiting sweeps through the south and the encouragement of plant officials for workers to "send for their families". Census data show the patterns of population growth for blacks and whites in Pawnee.

Percentage Change in Population in Pawnee by Race--1900 to 1970

	White	Black
1900 - 1910	49%	27%
1910 - 1920	122%	224%
1920 - 1930	89%	312%
1930 - 1940	3%	9%
1940 - 1950	11%	146%
1950 - 1960	12%	101%
1960 - 1970	4%	65%

These data illustrate that after the decade of the Depression, rates of growth among the black population of Pawnee are considerably higher than those for the white population. Another indication of the magnitude of the change can be seen by noting that in the years from 1900 to 1940, the percentage of Pawnee's population that was black increased from 1.5 to 4.2; this percentage increased to 26.6 in 1970 and is estimated at over 40 percent presently.

in that state, Pawnee had chosen not to annex additional land for expansion in the 1920's. As one realtor reported:

> In about 1940 the development [of Pawnee] was basically completed and they had used up the land within the city limits.

There were some parcels of vacant land on the north end but the decision not to remove the tax ceiling delayed building sewers, paving roads and providing other amenities attractive to developers until the 1960's.[1] There was little new construction in the city until the 1960's and by that time the existing housing stock was seriously deteriorated. In other words, Pawnee ran short of housing at about the time when it needed substantially more dwellings.[2]

The shortage of available housing created overcrowded conditions among the new arrivals. One resident recalls the conditons on the south side in the 1940's:

> Most people found housing with other relatives. Still others rented from other people that had large houses. Within these homes, there were many different families living together. Each family rented one or two rooms and shared a centralized kitchen and bathroom facilities. All families shared the same laundry facilities. Each family was given a certain day to do their washing and ironing in the basement of these homes. These homes had running hot and cold water, ceramic bathtubs, telephones, electric lights and refrigerators.

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[1] Informants report that delays in developing the north side were part of the attempt to contain the black population. If there were no houses, the blacks could not move. This charge is difficult to substantiate since there are other more plausible explanations that do not require acceptance of a conspiracy theory.

[2] There are many in Pawnee who believe that the desegregation of the schools "lowered the property values" by lowering the quality of the public schools. Several realtors told us that if the schools were better, they "wouldn't have any trouble" selling homes in Pawnee. The view, however, completely overlooks the availability of high quality housing immediately outside Pawnee.

However, even these arrangements were limited and soon the black population expanded across Syracuse Street into the southeastern quadrant of the city. The oldest sections of Pawnee became the poorest and that pattern continues to the present.

The neighborhoods on the south side of the city are severely depreciated. The heavy use of the last thirty years has accelerated their decline. Houses are often in very poor states of repair and have extremely low market values. Realtors in Pawnee report than an owner of a southside home cannot find a realtor to sell the house. The houses are assigned a value of $100 and so the commission on sales, if a buyer could be found, is so small that realtors will not handle the transaction. Most deals are transacted between relatives or friends and it is not uncommon for the owner to "give the house away".

This situation is compounded by a high percentage of "investor-ownership" in the area. People who can afford to buy houses at deflated prices in the hope that the value will increase. These owners rent the houses and pay little attention to upkeep and repairs, accelerating the decline of older structures.[1] Only the poorest live in the area and as soon as a family manages to accumulate enough capital, they leave for better areas to the north of the city. The relatively newer public housing does little to make the area attractive to new families. The contrast between conditions on the southside and surrounding areas is

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[1]Pawnee Schools report high rates of mobility among students in buildings located in the poorer areas. This mobility may reflect the patterns of family movement from one rented house to another, hopefully better, one. These conditons do not make for stable neighborhoods and offer many students a most disruptive learning career.

all too obvious. A recent planning document for the city notes that, despite some improvements in other sections,

> . . .when a visitor approaches Pawnee along Wilson Boulevard and South Syracuse Street just one mile south of downtown, all first impressions are negative. Up to that point, Wilson Boulevard has been landscaped and generally is not unpleasant. At that point, however, there is an abrupt and negative change: the landscaped median along the center of the approach is discontinued, and one becomes aware of an unattractive stretch of roadside development with vacant and poorly maintained buildings, cluttered signs, overhead wires, and a railroad grade crossing. A newcomer is presented a totally negative image of Pawnee for a full mile.

On the west side, the northern boundary of this seriously deteriorated area is Brown Road, which is but two blocks south of Pawnee West. The increasing numbers of black students and the increasing danger that the solidly middle-class areas closer to West will decline are causes of concern among certain West staff and parents. The "hard walls" seem to be an attempt to "screen out" these concerns.

As we mentioned above, the pattern of black residential movement was not directly northward. Instead, probably because of the residential composition of neighborhoods to the east and northeast, black population moved in those directions. In effect this movement represented a counter-clockwise pattern away from Pawnee West. This movement speaks to the stability of the neighborhoods which immediately surround West. More recent trends indicate that the direction of this pattern may be changing and those formerly stable areas may be changing.

The area which stretches west from the campus of Pawnee West, the "west side", has historically been the "best section in town". It was the first to be developed and the houses were of generally high quality.

Pawnee's first "suburb" was on the west side. It continues to have a "good reputation", as a realtor told us.

> The west side. . . . is a cohesive neighborhood, it is the most prestigious and it always has been since it was developed. There you have the executives, the school board members, etc. . . . [The] two schools that are in that area are upper-class schools--the most prestigious Junior High School and an elementary school which is a rich kid's school.

This is also the area where several Pawnee West staff live and so they are in a position to be personally aware of possible changes in the neighborhood.[1]

Change is noticeable in the areas immediately around West's campus. Just to the south of West there are several large houses which were built on spacious lots. Many of these former "homes" contain over twenty rooms. The rolling lawns, curved drives and porte cocheres recall a time of elegance which is still remembered by long-time residents. This is the area where Pawnee "society" once lived before leaving the city for more affluent communities in the county.[2] One long-time resident

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[1]Many of the black staff members choose not to live in Pawnee where there are fewer housing options but to commute from the larger metropolitan area 25 miles to the south.

[2]Realtors explain this decline in terms of a shift "in the trend of living near work". A white male realtor reported:

> As transportation and freeways developed the people could live further away and commute, so executives and other people were no longer concerned about living convenient (sic) and within a close distance to work. Many of those who could at that time afford [to move] moved into suburban areas--better areas, leaving more of the poor people in Pawnee. The downtown area--as more of the consumers moved out so did the businesses. The businesses closed down [and] that leaves even less to offer the city residents. Very little inconveniences business-wise and transportation no longer was an important element. People didn't need to live within five or ten minutes from work, they could spend a little more time and commute. So Pawnee became less convenient and lost its attraction for those purposes.

Our discussion of the site selection issue for the high school will highlight this concern for loss of service to residents.

told us of her memories of those better days.

> It breaks my heart every time I go down McKinley Street [the street which is directly to the south of Pawnee West] . Those were beautiful homes. There was a recognized society here then. You know, a Ladies Lawn and Garden Club. Not really rich people, but society that was recognized.

Many of these homes have now been taken over for institutional use. One former mansion served as the local YWCA until its use was restricted by the building inspector because of structural weaknesses. Another, directly across the street from West, has been taken over as a private psychiatric clinic and the Psychological Services Department of the School District can be found in one of the houses about one block south of the high school. Large houses to the east of the campus house the School District's Research and Evaluation Department and a Masonic Lodge. The residents who had sufficient income to support these structures as private dwellings have left the city and only the conversion to offices or clinics preserves their appearance. However, it is apparent to those who "remember the old Pawnee" that "things have changed".

The area farther west, "the best section of town", has fared slightly better. The houses, although old, continue to be well-maintained. Brick, Tudor and wood frame houses sit on wooded lots where the lawns are well-trimmed and gardens are planted with flowers. The streets are treelined and quiet. It is a pleasant residential area which offers excellent housing values. Comparable housing in the surrounding townships will cost the buyer from $25,000 to $50,000 more than houses in this neighborhood. The area has managed to maintain its solidly middle-class appearance. However, the residents are not unconcerned about their ability to maintain their neighborhood. One local community leader whose own children attend Pawnee Schools recently advised a colleague not to purchase a home in Pawnee

because of the problems of resale. This resident has taken several public stands about the importance of encouraging immigration into Pawnee, especially by middle-class whites. The concern about the imminent decline of the neighborhood is common among residents who see the relatively low cost of housing as attractive to a lower-class population. The area is integrated along race lines but has been relatively homogeneous along class lines. Increasingly residents are aware of the difficulties in preserving the middle-class characteristics of the area. They wonder if this neighborhood will soon "go the way of" so many of the older sections of Pawnee.

A case in point is the section that borders directly on their neighborhood and is immediately north of Pawnee West. This is an area of more modest, single-family homes an is considerably more "run down". The houses are in various states of disrepair: lawns are uncared for, porch rails remain broken and askew, broken windows are unreplaced. Fires are not uncommon in the wood frame buildings. The residents seem to be extremely poor and several are in transition from the State Psychiatric Hospital one mile further north. This neighborhood appears to be in serious and irreversible decline.

This, then, is the neighborhood in which the Pawnee West building was constructed. The new building stands out for its very "newness" in an area that may be on the edge of serious decay. The contrast between the new structure and its neighborhood seems to underlie the concern for "screening out" influences from that community which cannot be controlled.[1] For many, there is a strong symbolic value to West's "hard walls."

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[1]Failure to control the access of "outsiders" in the past has caused havoc. Descriptions of the disruptions that occurred in old West stress the fact that on occasion large groups of "outsiders" were admitted into the building. These groups roamed the halls and enticed students out of their classrooms, adding to the melee. The standard strategy adopted by teachers at that time was to lock their classroom doors with their students inside and hope that the doors would not be broken down. Teachers report that this strategy was not always effective since the doors at old West were half glass and could easily be shattered.

In closing we must note that there is evidence that changes in the patterns of residential segregation in Pawnee are becoming more widespread. Analysis of the racial composition of school attendance areas carried out by the school district indicate that a majority of these areas are within the limits established by the court order. Discussion has begun of the feasibility of requesting the Federal Court to life the busing order since many "neighborhood schools" would now be desegregated. We are unable to assert what impact these apparent changes in the racial composition of neighborhoods in Pawnee will have on the structure of desegregated education or on the perceived necessity to "screen out" undesireable community influence on the schools.

Summary

In this chapter we have presented a detailed description of the internal layout of the new building which houses Pawnee West High School. We see that issues of "control" continue to be important in the way people think about West. Also we talked of the neighborhood in which the new West was built. It is basically an old neighborhood that seems to be struggling to maintain its viability in the face of increasing pressure to ecological transition. The awareness of the imminence of the spread of urban decay gives meaning to the "hard wall-soft wall" symbolism which characterizes the high school building. In the next chapter, we will examine the perceptions of various members of the community about this building.

Chapter III

The Place of Pawnee West in its Community--Ecological Orientations and Educational Expectations

We have used some considerable space describing the physical characteristics of the new building which houses Pawnee West and the neighborhoods in which it is located. This description sets the scene for the patterns of social relations which will be outlined in the following sections of this report. Before leaving the physical description, however, we must comment upon the importance which the construction of the new building had for the community in which it stands. The reactions of different segments of the Pawnee community to the new construction reflect the pervasive ambivalence of the community about the process of desegregation, the ability of public education to meet the community needs and the future of the city itself.

Our understanding of the complex issues that surround the community's reaction to new Pawnee West can be presented using Erik Cohen's "multidimensional approach to social ecology." Cohen (1976:49) reminds us:

> The manner in which we see our environment depends largely on what we are looking for in it. But what we look for is not just an individual or idiosyncratic matter--it depends on our cultural conditioning, our accustomed social roles, and our definition of the situation from which we relate to the environment.

In Pawnee, the historic patterns of segregation in education, housing and jobs have created a situation in which different segments of the city's population "look at" local developments in markedly different ways. These differences surfaced around the issue of the selection of the site on which the new high school was to be constructed and continue to be evident in current thinking about Pawnee West. In this section, we will discuss these different "ecological orientations" and indicate how they seem to influence community reaction to the high school.

An "ecological orientation" is a particular way of perceiving the environment. These different perceptions are important because they are related to the ways in which people deal with the environment.

> . . . ecological orientations, by providing differential perspectives on the environment, lead man to act upon it in different ways; and by such action the relationship between man and environment and eventually the ecological system itself are differentially shaped and modified. (Cohen, 1976:49)

Our emphasis will not be on future modifications of the environment but rather reactions to the altered "shape" of Pawnee West High School. As we shall see, serious questions arose about the particular allocation of resources which new West represented. The origin of the questions was in the complex pattern of "perceptions" which the Pawnee community had toward the high school and the city of Pawnee itself. West High School became and continues to be a focal point for broader community concerns as well as specific educational matters. By outlining the perceptions of the community we hope to set the scene in which the particular life of high school is played out.

In developing his paradigm, Cohen identifies four separable "orientations" to the environment: the instrumental, the territorial, the sentimental, and the symbolic. Each of these orientations may occur with "suborientations" and each has its own "regulative mechanism or process." For example, the "instrumental orientation" has both a "technological" and an "economic suborientation" with the respective "regulative mechanisms" of "knowledge" and "market exchange" (Cohen, 1976: 51-53). We will not attempt a detailed analysis in terms of Cohen's paradigm in this report. Rather, we shall use his suggestive conceptualization to highlight the various community perspectives present in Pawnee about the new high school.

Instrumental orientation

The perspective on the environment which views points in space "as resources because of their own qualities, their location, or both" is termed the "instrumental orientation" (E. Cohen, 1976:51-52). In the late 1960's, the resources promised by the construction of a new Pawnee West were much needed by the city. The "natural resources" offered by more classrooms, modern laboratory facilities and a spacious field house for athletic events were recognized by all segments of the community and the Board of Education requested millage to support the construction of these facilities in 1968. The value of these new facilities as a "locational resource" became clear in the controversy which erupted around the selection of a site for the construction.

By "locational resources", E. Cohen (1976:52) refers to "points in space which, irrespective of their other qualities, are instrumently valuable because of their location with respect to other points in space". The conflict over the site of new West hinged on what neighborhood would come to benefit from the location of the resources represented by the new building.

Two sites were proposed for the construction: one was an "inner-city" location to the south of the site of the present building in the severely depressed area; the other, recommended by the Board, was to the west and north on the grounds of the state hospital that stretch over several hundred acres on the western boundary of Pawnee. The "inner-city site" was favored by predominantly black groups of citizens since it was located closer to the largest concentration of black families. The whites in Pawnee were in favor of the "hospital site" which was in a "safer" section farther away from the poor southside. The arguments

which were advanced for the selection of the "inner-city" directly referred to the value of the new high school as a "locational resource".[1] The urban planners who recommended the "inner-city site" stated that building the school there could provide the means of "fighting social and economic problems and eliminating slums and poverty". The new facility for the high school would provide a "weapon to break down economic hardships created by isolated neighborhood". The additional people who would routinely enter the area because of the location of the school would have beneficial effects on the neighborhood. The elimination of sub-standard housing to clear land for the construction, the presence of additional police protection and the well-lighted recreation areas adjacent to the school would all help create a "healthier climate" for neighborhood youth. For members of the black community, the new Pawnee West was clearly a "locational resource".

The School Board and the proponents of the "hospital site" denied the prominence of locational criteria. The Board argued that their charge was education not urban development. An official Board statement made

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[1]The controversy which developed over the site selection became quite heated. When the millage was presented to the residents of Pawnee, the Board had tentatively selected the "hospital site". After the millage passed and before the final selection had been announced, community groups began to protest the Board's action. For several months Board meetings were disrupted. Black students and then whites boycotted classes at the high schools. Recriminations were exchanged among the citizen groups, the Board and school administrators. Finally a compromise was reached which saw the school built adjacent to its old location. But this solution was not reached until the President of the Board had resigned to avoid further harassment about the decision and the composition of the School Board had changed. A major criticism of the School Board in advocating the "hospital site" was its failure to adequately address the needs of the minority population in Pawnee. A local reporter noted the "general over-all insensitivity of the Board to the problems of minority people in Pawnee".

It should also be noted that the black community was becoming increasingly aware of the discrimination that was shown to be prevalent in Pawnee public schools during this period. Evidence collected by citizen groups at this time figured prominently in the decision which ordered busing to achieve racial balance in Pawnee schools two years later.

clear that the "School Board is elected to govern the educational needs of total school district, not to rebuild the city." However, at least secondarily, the locational aspects of the new facilities were addressed in providing a rationale for selection of the "hospital site". The site to the northwest would provide greater safety to students, be less costly to acquire and require less construction time to completion. But, above all, the "hospital site" was "educationally more sound". As it turned out, the coaltion of citizens and urban planners forced the Board to compromise on a location that was almost mid-way between the "inner city" and "hospital" sites.

The conflict which developed over the site of the new Pawnee West High School seemed to directly involve access to the facility.[1] Location at the "inner-city" site would afford easier access to the resources for black youths who would be forced to travel farther to use the facilities if they were located on "hospital site". On the other hand, locating the building on the "hospital site" would decrease the identification of West as the "black high school" by offering slightly easier access to whites.[2] In this case, where the new West was located seemed strongly related to how the residents of Pawnee perceived the building.

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[1] In his description of the "economic suborientation" of the more general "instrumental orientation", E. Cohen (1976:52-53) makes the point that "accessibility. . . becomes the paramount criterion for the evaluation of space in terms of economic suborientation to the environment." We will not pursue his analysis of the "more institutionalized" structure of this suborientation expect to note that economic value of the land as determined by market factors had little to do the eventual outcome of this conflict.

[2] The decision of the School Board to build a new elementary school in a predominantly white area on the basis of "educationally sound reasons" had been upheld by the courts in the 1950's. The attempt to justify the construction of new West closer to the white area is reminiscent of those earlier arguments but climate in the black community had changed as will be seen in the next section.

Territorial orientation

The perspective which views "space in terms of control" is the territorial orientation to social ecology. (E. Cohen, 1976:53-54). What is at stake under this orientation is "dominance" not in technological or economic terms but in the more overt patterns of politics or the military. Although when we deal with a unit as small as the "territory" of Pawnee West, we take for granted that we are not talking at the level of grand military strategy or formal politics. In a formal sense, all members of the community have a legitimate right to occupy the building in question. However, informally the issue of control seems to be an important perspective which organizes the way people in Pawnee think about Pawnee West.

We noted in the previous section how the site selection process involved issues of the disposition and use of "locational resources." Clearly a territorial orientation was also operating in the context of that controversy. The issue resolved into one of not simply community control but control by which community (e.g., black or white) and for what purposes (e.g., reform in the ways of dealing with race relations or appeasement of vocal segments of the white community by perpetrating the existing conditons of discrimination). The black community views the outcome of the site selection battle and the broader desegregation order as a victory--as evidence that they have wrested some control over "the system" in Pawnee. A prominent black attorney in Pawnee who was involved in the desegregation cases said:

> [The outcomes of these issues] demonstrated that the black community had the ability to challenge the system and it demonstrated that the black community had the resources to challenge the system, and that the system affected [the black community] adversely and unconstitutionally. It demonstrated that black people and their friends had the ability and commitment necessary to prevail. And so it had to change and affect those systems that act on poor people, on black people and minority people. It has to be viewed as a favorable consequence.

In terms of the territorial orientation, then, Pawnee Schools in general and Pawnee West in particular are arenas of conflict for control in the community and the black community seems to have won at least a limited victory.

The importance of control is realized by parents in both the black and white community. For blacks, success in the battle for control represents preserving chances for "integrated education". One black parent, herself a West graduate, told the interviewer:

> Well, up until not too long ago, there was only one high school. That's why the high school has always been desegregated. That's why we fought to hard to keep the high school where it is because at one time that was the only high school that was here. You see that desegregation order upset many people here because the way the school district had the boundary lines. Black kids didn't get a chance to go to school with white kids until they were in high school; there were all black schools. The elementary school and the junior high school which had all black students but when students were ready for high school, they went to the only one we had.

This parent values "integrated education" because, for her, it means her child will get a better education. White parents also say that the situation is better as a result of the fight to desegregate the schools. A very active, white mother of a current Pawnee West student and also a graduate of West does not think the struggle is over.

> Racially, I feel that there has been so much attention based on integration that it puts pressure on the students. You know the busing integration was only a five year order. It could go back to the way it was but I hope they don't because it is a lot better now. Before there were trouble spots. Puerto Rican and black neighborhoods and schools. But now every school is integrated with 30 to 35 percent black and I feel very positive about that. It has definitely improved the whole system.

Not surprisingly, not all parents are as favorable about the aftermath of desegregation at Pawnee West.[1] Another white parent reports her view.

> I think busing has had a negative effect. I don't care whether black or white people get together or not. The idea was to solve educational problems and it hasn't accomplished that. I don't think busing has brought up black people any. A sign would be the debate team--it is all white students and if busing had worked there would be some black students on the debate team by now. Of course, I really cannot talk to the black people.

A black parent sees a deteriorated situation at West compared to when she was a student there.

> Things seemed to have been different back in those days. I don't remember thinking of West as a particularly bad place to be, but now that my kids are there I think it is pretty bad. Things have changed so much though, you know.

The particular aspect of Pawnee West which alarms this parent involves what is emerging at the latest "control" issue at the high school--expulsions and suspensions.[2] This mother told us that:

> . . . they tried to expel my child from [Pawnee West] and a friend of mine told me that they just couldn't do that. They just couldn't put him out like that and all these charges that they had against hime were just simply illegal. That even if a person is arrested seven times and then taken to court on the eighth time for another offense they can't bring all the other seven charges against him. What they did to me, they sent me this long list of things my son had done and said that he was going to be expelled from school. Well, what I did was we went to this lawyer and he said "Did you do this?" and he [my son] admitted to doing most of the things which weren't that serious so we took it to court and he is still in school. Technically though he is on what you call "home detention", don't ask me. I don't know what that means but he is ordered by the court to attend school every day and also play basketball every day. This is exactly what he likes to do and that's what the judge ordered him to do. So he seems to be doing OK, at least he is going to school every day now. I am pleased about that, but it was long hassle taking off from work, going to court to see about him.

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[1] Surveys of parents conducted periodically by the school district since 1971 have shown that there is generally a high level of support for the schools among black and white parents. This support is generally higher among black parents than among white parents.

[2] The school district is currently cooperating with a nationally funded project in examining the patterns of expulsions and suspensions in the high schools.

Black parents see a definite pattern in the exclusions from Pawnee West. However, there is a growing resistance to accepting the results of this process. A black mother reported:

> . . . . I know they [school officials] like to put them out then they can get rid of them and they get rid of the ones that might speak up and that might say something that is going on. I think that is what is going on now, that the reason they expel so many kids from school without the proper rights because the parents don't know what the student rights are. They are just out of school. . . . They want them out of there, they want it that way but they aren't getting rid of my kids--I know what their rights are. Even if they don't do as well as I want them to do, I want them to follow some of the rules at least and make an effort of their own but just because they get in a fight or they skip school, I'm going to stand by and make sure that they don't get put out of school because when that happens that's the end of everything. They are in the streets for the rest of their lives. There is not a thing for them there in the streets. And if they are put out of school they don't even know what else there is for them in the world. They don't stay in there long enough to know what the alternatives are. There are alternatives. Sometimes it is hard to see they are there.

Preventing officials at Pawnee West from "putting their children" out is seen as a major problem and several parents express the hope that citizen interest can be mobilized about this issue in the way it was about the site selection issue.[1]

The "political" overtones of this issue can be seen in the more developed "theories" about the process of expulsion held by certain parents. In a long interview which focused on attempts by the West staff to control information about West, a black parent describes the "tactic" of "hushing things up".

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[1] We should note that the reaction against "school officials" does not seem to be a racial issue since black administrators and staff are as likely to be criticezed as whites.

> Don't you know that [hushing things up] is a tactic? Don't you know that that is the way the system operates?. . . They don't want to know that our school district isn't the most perfect in the world. The way it sounds when people talk about the school district is that they have the best of everything. They have so many community workers, community relations workers, social workers, every kind of workers you can name, that is going to help somebody but nobody gets help, nobody gets help. The ones that get help probably don't need the help but the ones that need the help don't get it. And you're doggone right that when something happens or any type of violence--if a kid has a knife you don't hear about it. You don't hear about half the stuff that goes on around here. That's because they are whisked off to the office and put out of school and that is the end of that.

According to this interpretation, the officials at Pawnee West are exercising control by withholding information.[1] Parents, especially blacks, are no longer to tolerate the results of these processes without fighting back.

Issues involving control over the resources of Pawnee West seem to remain at the fare of people's perceptions of the high school. We do not present these views to imply that they characterize a majority of parents. We believe that at least as many parents think Pawnee West is responsive to the needs of their children. The majority seem not to want to be bothered and complain when repeated contacts from the school interfere with their normal routines. However, for several parents, the legitimacy of their claim to use the facilities of Pawnee West is an important issue. These parents have a very different view of West from those parents who feel that they can exert some influence over high school policy.

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[1] In the course of our observations, we encountered several occasions when staff expressed concern about the "negative image" of Pawnee West. We observed attempts to "manage the impression" which the public would have on these occasions. However, we did not see any overt attempts by anyone to "hush up" events.

Sentimental orientation

Environmental space can acquire social value because of the attachments which people have to that space, either because of their birth or traditions or because of the prestige that is associated with the locale (E. Cohen, 1976:54-56). These "sentimental orientations" are suggested as particularly important in understanding neighborhood dynamics in urban settings. The residents of Pawnee display such a sense of attachment to Pawnee West.

Above, we have discussed the importance of Pawnee West as "the black high school" and the efforts made by the black community, especially, to insure that the new building would remain "close to" where they live. Much of the flavor of these comments includes the sense of attachment to West as "their school". Moreover, demonstrations of this attachment can be seen in the attendance at the more visible extensions of West's activities, athletic events. Observers at these athletic events were impressed with the composition of the crowds who attend. In addition to the expected number of students, a majority of the spectators seem to be in their twenties, thirties or forties.[1] It is not uncommon to see entire families at the games, including three or

[1]The social components of the athletic events are much more important than the actual competition. For example, at football games the crowd will pay rapt attention to the bands at half-time after virtually ignoring the actual play during the game. There is more pressure at the basketball games to get into the lobby for a "place on the wall" than there is to get into the field house for a seat to watch the game.

four generations. The "small town" quality of Pawnee[1] intensifies this pattern. A former West student, a black-female stated:

> You don't know, but here in Pawnee that's all there is here in Pawnee for them to attend. I bet you never go to your high school football game or basketball game in [the big city]. But here in Pawnee everybody goes. That's why I wanted to get away from here. There really isn't anything to do here. Everybody still goes to all the high school things.

Not all graduates try to "escape" their identification with West. It is frequently the case that former students only develop "school spirit" after they leave West. In an interview with a black family we learned:

Mother:	You know I plan to go to the football game; tomorrow is the first game. . . . You [her daughter] are going to the game with us tomorrow night aren't you? (Daughter smiles).
Daughter:	Oh, ya I wouldn't miss it.
Mother:	You see she has got more school spirit now than she did when she was a student at West.
Interviewer:	She has more spirit now?
Mother:	Yes, she didn't go to the games last year with us at all.
Daughter:	Well that's cause I had homework and stuff to do and it's somewhere to go now that I'm not there. Everybody goes after they graduate.
Mother:	We are planning to go to the game tomorrow night and we will have loads of fun. . . .

Attendance at the games seems to be a mechanism whereby the whole family can maintain a sense of identification with Pawnee West.[2]

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[1] We noted several things in the course of our research which indicated the "smallness" of Pawnee but this perception was most clearly stated by one of the black residents we interviewed:

> Pawnee is so small you just know everybody. (Turning to the interviewer) I know you're not from Pawnee because if you were we would know you. We would know exactly where you were from and all about you because we know about the people we like, we know about the people we don't like, we know about those we can stand, and anything that goes on in Pawnee, somebody, somewhere knows about it. We could even tell you where everybody's family is from. . . .

There are times when school district staff feels this intensity, especially if an "education" position differs from "community wisdom".

[2] Athletics are a major identification at West. For example, in the main office, various trophies of past successful competion are displayed.

It is not only this "primordial" sense of attachment which operates to produce the "sentimental orientation" to West. There are other "prestige" elements in people's attachment to Pawnee West. For example, theatrical productions are attended with almost the same fervor as the athletic events and these productions are reported to be "as good as a professional company." They contribute to a "sense of pride" which people feel about West.

Academically, Pawnee West High School has had the reputation of being "the best high school in Pawnee," the school "where the good kids went" to get their education. Although this academic glory has paled somewhat in recent years, it is still recalled. Below we present the comments of several Pawnee West teachers.

> [There are] fewer good students now and things are going down hill. This reflects the population of Pawnee and can't be helped.
>
> I've lost many of the good kids. You know there aren't any Jewish kids at West anymore. They've all left.
>
> There is no question that students [ten or fifteen years ago] had a better self identification factor. They wanted to stay in school to learn so they could go to college or get a better job. This is no longer true. . . . There are still some good college prep kids but they aren't prepared to do the work.
>
> In the past five years, their attitude [toward learning] is far better. Although they work as hard as any kids ever, their ability has diminished. I require a lesser amount of work than I did ten years ago but what they do is no less well done. You know I've been reading their final research papers. There are a couple of really good ones but it has taken all semester. A few years ago the students would have done two papers plus several book reports. . . . I like my classes to be exciting, charged up. But I don't ask them to do as much. They don't have the background, the experience.

Most students know that West has sent several players to varsity positions on Big Ten teams. Staff can recall the rosters of West teams from many years ago. This was illustrated by a conversation with a school official and a visitor where the content of the discussion was the roster of a West team in the early 1960's. The official recalled more of the players than the visitor who had played on an opposing team at that time. As we shall see in our discussion of students at West, sports is seen as a road to success by many young people. These expectations are often unrealistic.

> You know kids come back and ask me "we were better, weren't we?" They all think they were better but there isn't all that much difference. . . . The proportion of college bound students has declined. All the Jews have moved to the suburbs. There used to be a much larger Jewish population. And, you know, those kids were good students.

The change in the student body interferes with the teachers' ability to do their best work.[1]

Other aspects of the teaching situation maintain prestige elements. The faculty as a group is seen as still being "first rate" and innovativeness of the programs at West is respected in other districts.

> When I started here there were five English teachers with twenty or more years of experience. Very scholarly men. But they were willing to help me when I needed it. They did not make me feel like a foreigner. I still think we have that kind of faculty.

Others agree that an atmosphere persists at West which makes the teachers feel that they are "working among professional educators, that there are good people at Pawnee West who know their jobs".[2]

> Teacher 1: Old West was an "old heap" of a building but it had a very good reputation. You realize that when you get away from this place how good a reputation it has. Whenever you go to meetings, you hear people say what's happening in Pawnee. There is a new program, they have in Pawnee. Flexible schedules--they're doing that in Pawnee. Electives--they have that in Pawnee.
>
> Interviewer: Is that the way it used to be? Or is it still true?
>
> Teacher 1: No. It's still true. We still have a good reputation for innovating, for doing new things.
>
> Teacher 2: Well, it certainly used to be true but I would disagree with her (Teacher 1) about now. I don't think our reputation is as good as it once was.

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[1] One teacher told us that she was teaching the "same as I was ten years ago." For her, the work of teaching is independent of the students whom she teaches. Difficult students simply provide "more challenge". But as a "professional", she does not mind that challenge. According to another teacher, "Many teachers will talk about the "good old days" without remembering they weren't all that good."

[2] Another theme which also characterizes teachers is "It's not my fault" which we will not develop here. We note that several teachers who are critical of the conditions at West explain the situation in terms of errors of other staff members, e.g., counselors and aiministrators. Even among this group, however, there is a sense of "attachment" to some aspects of Pawnee West.

Whether Pawnee West's reputation is "as good as it once was" in other school districts does not detract from the high regard which members of the community still hold for the high school. Many students seem to agree with one informant who told us that West has "really good, super curriculum programs". One active white parent summed up her view of the educational program at Pawnee West:

> Educationally, it is good. The English Department is great. If there is anything that is a little weak over there it is the Math Department . . . some of the instructors are better than others. That is the only weakness I've found. I think that there is a lot there if the student wants to take advantage of it. I can only talk from experience. My son did real well and has gone on to school and my daughter is on the Debate Team. I used to go to Pawnee West two or three days a week.

But the real "curriculum" in which the community has pride deals with social relationships. At Pawnee West students are learning "how to cope with other people from different situations, backgrounds and things like that." One graduate, a white male, told us that this kind of learning had given him a "real advantage" over students from a predominantly white school:

> . . . you could take a kid from Pawnee West and you could put him in almost any situation and any social situation and, although he may not exactly fit in, he will be aware enough to where he can kind of smooth off some of these rough edges and get on and keep himself out of trouble.

Another white, female student currently attending West summed it up this way:

> . . . you can learn your ABC's and coloring anywhere but I think Pawnee West prepares you more for life.

People in the community think Pawnee West is able to offer students "preparation for life" because of the diversity of students and situations that occur at the high school. If there were no "problems", students would not have the opportunity to grow by solving them. At the back of most people's minds when they discuss this aspect of Pawnee West is the violence which continues to form an important part of West's reputation.

Many people who are concerned about preserving West as a "quality high school" work very hard to keep the violence at the school in perspective. They take every opportunity to "spread the word" about West and become visibly upset when they are unsuccessful.[1] There is a very real attempt to dispel the image of Pawnee West as a "violent" place because it detracts from the kinds of attachment (e.g., "school spirit") needed to maintain West as a "good school."

We must discuss West's reputation for violence since it figures so prominantly in community reaction to the space. Our intention is not to imply that Pawnee West is more violent than any other high school. Indeed our observations revealed relatively few instances of over violence.[2]

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[1]We note that this kind of activity on the part of staff at Pawnee West may be interpreted as "hushing things up up there" by members of the community.

[2]It is difficult to get a "count" of the incidents of violence which occur at Pawnee West. In the initial phases of desegregation, there was a consistent attempt to "count" these incidents. These were generally defined as "confrontations between groups of students of different races" and there were several. However, recently there are virtually none of this type of confrontation. There were fewer than six during the two years of our field work and all were relatively contained. Counting incidents is more difficult now. In an attempt to cooperate with a national study of safe schools, building staff counted only four events that remotely qualified for the one month period of the study. All these were incidents involved single students.

We are unable to estimate exactly how many incidents do actually occur because of the different ways in which they may be handled and the reluctance of staff to "count" these events. A student reporting something may be seen by the grade principal, hall monitor or police counselor. No records are systematically kept of these kinds of contacts. Students tell us of frequent "mini-incidents" but these are not usually reported. Therefore "hard" counts are impossible.

The resistance to "counting" seems to be endemic to staff at Pawnee West. A frequent reaction to desegregation is that the main thing which it produced is forcing people to count. One parent recalled a conversation with one of Pawnee West's staff members about the amount of paper work that desegregation engendered:

> One [staff person] I talked to said "I'm going crazy with all the paper work and everything. . . how many white students do this? How many black students do that? You know if I decided to jump off the building, you know they would say "stop. You must take 30 percent of the black students with you." There is so much paper work to make sure that this program and that program is integrated properly."

However, many people think West is a violent place and any understanding of West is a violent place and any understanding of West must deal with this accepted view. Its reputation for violence is an important aspect of community thinking about Pawnee West.

The late 1960's was a time of turmoil in the country and in Pawnee. The emerging awareness of racial discrimination provoked more response from the Pawnee community than there had been previously. Issues like the site selection controversy produced "demonstrations" which were all the more troubling because of their unpredictability. The suspicion that "forced integration" was close at hand tended to intensify long-standing animosities among blacks and whites in Pawnee. Organized resistance to the court-ordered busing may have served as a catalyst for the violence that erupted. The memory of those times is still fresh in the minds of many residents and is associated with Pawnee West.[1] For example, one white student vividly recalls:

> Well, back in '71 it was a general sign of the times. There were a lot of high school dropouts and gangs of blacks. . . . I remember the black guys lined up on one side of the street and the white guys on the other. They would fight. Gang war. The school (Pawnee West) was just opened then; there were no hall monitors or anything. Finally one of the gangs came in at lunch hour and just started ripping it up. I guess we joined in too. . . if you got into the corner--an individual in the corner--it might be bad news, but just there out in the open in a group it was a lot of fun turning the tables over and going crazy. They didn't do it because they just didn't want to have to go to school. I remember one other time I went to school for band practice and we came up from the back and there was a lot of gangs in the parking lot and the principal and band teacher were out there and they said either go home or get back in the building quick. . . . We all went into the building, but we first got pounded on before we got into the building.

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[1]Despite the somewhat dramatic quality of the violence which did occur in the early years of desegregation, the actual amount of that violence is reported to have been small. One police officer reported:

> . . .the busing situation caused a lot of tension, very little conflict, contrary to a lot of reports that you read regarding it. There was a lot of verbage but there wasn't all of the physical problems that the media portrayed there to be. It was a tense situation for a period of time but through the combined efforts of community people both black, white and brown (sic) they calmed it and they quieted it right down.

The observers heard several discussions of who was responsible for the violence: the majority of the people we talked with held the view that "agitators" and "outsiders" who were "pretty old looking students" were responsible. We did not attempt to examine the validity of this claim. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that whoever was responsible the residue of the violence of those times still haunts Pawnee West.

Staff who "lived through" that period at Pawnee West have many stories which capture the essence of those days for them. One white staff member told of the personal danger which he risked all too often.

> Well, things aren't as bad as they used to be. You know I've been beaten up plenty of times in terms of students. One time there was a fight in the West Commons and I walked in there and two kids are going at it and eight or ten other kids join in and I'm getting beat up, hit and kicked and all that kind of stuff. You know, then they say we are sorry. We were just trying to break up the fight.

One white female teacher who witnessed one of her students stab another outside her classroom told us what those times were like for teachers.

> Those were the days when you would come in the morning and wonder if you were going to make it through the day. It was a war zone. Friends in other districts would run up to you when you met them to find out the latest from Pawnee. When people found out you worked in Pawnee, they would be amazed and ask how you could do it. I sometimes wondered myself.

The experience of those very difficult times has created a bond among those staff members who survived it--"we went through hell together".[1]

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[1] Sharing the experience of the violent times at Pawnee West is a bond only for those teachers who were there at that time. The younger members of the faculty are, of course, excluded from this relationship. This fact may contribute to the separation between "newcomers" and "old timers" which we are told is a significant split among West's faculty. We note that this is not the only distinction as even the most important one for teachers. There is some evidence that male-female is also quite important.

One result of these events was the attempt to limit the large groups of students who would congregate since these times offered greater opportunities for confrontations. The elimination of the lunch program at the high school was one tactic. Also there were severe cuts in the number of extracurricular activities that were held.[1] A Parent Club member explained:

> Music program, some of the school dances, pep assembly. . . [t]hings like this that they had to cut out for awhile. . . [b]ecause you know for awhile things were so bad up there the kids would be so unruly during the assemblies and pep assemblies and things that you couldn't hear the groups that were performing or anything you know so they just completely cut out all of that. And now, the kids have asked you know to have this put back and things are going well. [The kids] are handling themselves beautifully and there is no problem.

Staff at West also notice the change in conditions and have attempted to modify their reaction to student requests for more activities accordingly.[2]

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[1]Athletic events were no longer scheduled in the evenings and the Homecoming Dance, a big social event, as well as other dances were suspended. In the first year of observations, the Homecoming Dance was reinstituted. We describe the details of this event under a different topic later in this report. However, another indication of what was at risk in holding these events can be seen in the other associated events surrounding Homecoming. Traditionally, Homecoming at Pawnee West included a parade of floats through the town from West to the Stadium where the game was played. The parade, led by the School Band usually draws crowds of spectators who line the streets to watch. One side effect of the tense situation was the abandonment of floats because they required so much advance work and were on occasion destroyed before the parade. A school official reported:

> You know we went to no floats a couple of years ago. They got burned and torn up and that kind of stuff. We just couldn't have it--they were too much work to be wasted. So we just decorate cars--things the kids can do at the last minute.

[2]A student-produced film by Pawnee High School students focused upon the concern which administrators have for "control". The film, entitled "A Day Without Incident", portrays the high school atmosphere in Pawnee as if it was a prison. Although the producers state that the message of the film applies to both Pawnee High Schools, it was filmed at West. A screening of the film before a group of parents led to numerous supportive statements from the audience about the veracity of the portrayal of West. This would seem to indicate the pervasiveness of this view of the school. It seems that if school officials are changing, they are not changing fast enough.

One Pawnee West staff person, a white male, talked of the change and the lessening of restrictions on activities.

> I think that we're nowhere near what we were four years ago. We can do things that were impossible then. For example, four years ago if somebody had suggested having a dance, it wouldn't have been seriously considered because of how we though the climate was out there in the community. But I think that has changed. We are able to defuse incidents. Not as many incidents occur. Consequently we can expand the activities that are available to kids that are in the school. We can give them a chance to do things we would have been afraid to do back them. The administrators don't have to handle as much personally as they did previously. Things have eased up. There aren't as many incidents that have to be dealt with. There isn't the crisis kind of atmosphere. Look, you have to remember for the past ten years the chief mandate from the Superintendent and the Board of Education was not to let the kids hurt each other. We were responding to that, and that's important. The safety of the clientele was the primary concern of the school. Now, the climate has changed. Maybe safety is not as much of a problem. Therefore, maybe we can do more kinds of things. You know, it's like this Homecoming Dance. That was a successful event. It was something which we could run for the kids and without fear of all kinds of repercussions.[1]

How many or how few controls need to be applied to student activities is a matter of some continuing concern, despite the "change in the climate of the community". Vandalism resulted after a girl's basketball game which was held shortly after the Homecoming Dance--at least one parent was seriously injured and over three-thousand dollars worth of damage was done. The staff person continued:

> You know [the Girl's Basketball game] was an open admission policy. Anybody could come in from the outside. There weren't any tickets. Maybe that's too open. Clearly we cannot have things worth $3,000 worth of damages done every time there is an activity. We can't support that kind of thing.

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[1] Some concern was apparent in the arrangements for the dance since "there were almost as many chaperones as students" in attendance.

Such incidents as the aftermath of the basketball game cited above create problems for staff who sincerely want to "ease up on control". Moreover, they do little to foster a better image for West in the "small town" of Pawnee.[1]

We have discussed those aspects of community perceptions of Pawnee West which influence a "sentimental orientation." Athletic competition, academic strength and a reputation for violence are three features which residents isolate as factors in their "attachment" to the high school. We discovered that these "attachments" may be intensely positive or negative. Moreover, the "hard walls" are not effective in screening out these concerns. The extent to which "the street is in West" will emerge more clearly as we discuss other aspect of school life.

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[1]Part of the frustration of those people who are attempting to foster a "more realistic" image of Pawnee West is the extent to which its "bad press" has extended. A white parent reported a conversation with the coach of a southwestern college where her son was a student:

> When we went down to visit [my son, we talked with the coach]. He said, "Oh, you have two students from Pawnee?" I said, "Yes, I do". "Well they don't happen to be from Pawnee West do they?" "Yes, they both are, "I said. He said, "Well you know you [are] really lucky to get them. That is a real tough team. They are real good players from that school." I said, "I know." And he said, "Well, you know that is a real tough school". And when I heard that I said, "Oh no, you mean I have to travel 1500 miles to hear that!" It is not a tough school. It is just like any other school. I don't want people to think that it is a tough school. I've never seen anything there. A woman called me up and asked me if I was afraid to walk down the halls and I said, "No. I have a daughter going there every day. If I thought that there was something there to be afraid of I certainly wouldn't let her. I've never seen any violence or anything and it's great. The students know me there. I come in and they say Hi, Mrs. R. They know me and it's nice. I've never seen anybody be rude.

Symbolic orientation

Finally Erik Cohen (1976:56-57) identifies the "symbolic orientation" to the environment which includes the "meaning" which the environment has to the individual, its ability to "express or represent his values". E. Cohen argues that this orientation develops from the culture of the group and incorporates aesthetic or moral-religious suborientations. It seems that aesthetic suborientation is applicable in considering orientations to Pawnee West. This perspective involves the appreciation of "the environment in terms of the continuum "beauty-ugliness" or one of its variations". We will not dwell on this orientation but will merely note that the new structure which houses Pawnee West has met with a range of aesthetic reactions. Those who see it as a "prison" tend to react unfavorably to other features of the high school program; those who view the new building as "attractive and modern" tend to be favorable to the general school climate at West. In other words, there seems to be a relationship between the symbolic value of the Pawnee West High School building for an individual and a more general reaction to the educational and social aspects of the school.

Summary

In this section we have described in some detail the complex reactions which members of the Pawnee West community display toward the high school. We have seen that different individuals react differently to the various features of new West. First, the value of West as a "locational resource" was appreciated by most members of the community but a conflict arose about the actual placement of that resource. This conflict seems related to a more pervasive set of "territorial" issues which involve the perceived struggle for control of West by blacks and whites. Despite these divisive issues, large numbers of people in Pawnee continue to have a great "attachment" to the high school, taking pride in its athletic and scholastic successes. The persistent, and perhaps unjustified, reputation for violence that plagues West works against this sense of "attachment". Finally, the aesthetic reactions of the community typify perceptions under these other orientations, creating for members of the community a visible reminder of what they like or dislike about the school and their community. The importance of understanding these various perceptions will be seen more clearly when the social structure of the high school is discussed. The "hard walls" of West are unable to keep out the influence of these divergent views in the community and the eventual success of the educational and social programs in the high school will depend upon the ability of that organization to deal effectively with the community pressures.

Chapter IV

Time on the Inside--The Social Organization of Pawnee West

> A man's sense of time derives from his place in the social structure and his lived experience.
>
> J. Horton

Introduction

The social organization of Pawnee West can be understood as the attempts of various sets of actors to control the social environment in which they must act out their roles. Social environments which are characterized by high levels of uncertainty seem to intensify the needs of actors to exert control. The efforts to remove racial discrimination against blacks in Pawnee has heightened the levels of ambiguity that surround several institutional areas of city life, especially the area of education. Pawnee Schools were and continue to be the target of intense scrutiny and pressure to reduce racial discrimination in the delivery of their services. Local educators, who in their own view had been doing a conscientious job of educating Pawnee youth, both black and white were subjected to great amounts of implicit and explicit criticism. There seemed to be a growing dissatisfaction with local traditions in schooling. However, the very questioning of traditions which produces the desire to "do things better' weakens the basis for change by so increasing the level of ambiguity that any action becomes difficult. No organization can continue to function once the level of ambiguity becomes too high (March and Olson, 1976) and local educators and their clients have attempted to resolve this uncertainty. The confrontation with intense criticism and the resulting ambiguity seems to have been an important part of the "lived experience" of actors at Pawnee West. In this chapter we will demonstrate how the internal organization of the high school seems to reflect the attempts to control the social environment in that building.

Space and time--the currency of control

The elements of the social organization that are most susceptible for control are the physical spaces available for certain activities and the time which can be allocated for participation in them. Space and time provide the means by which "safe" social environments can be constructed, maintained and defended. The authorities of Pawnee West--administrators, teachers and supporting staff--believe it important to control these dimensions of social experience in order to effectively manage student activities and restrict undesirable influences from entering the school walls. We have discussed in detail the "hard walls" which surround the exterior of Pawnee West and protect those "inside" the building. We have also seen how difficult staff finds controlling the internal space at West because of the many "hiding places" it provides. Emphasis has been placed upon monitoring large gathering spaces so that the opportunities for major confrontations between groups of students are minimized. Most staff agree that little can effectively be done to eliminate the small-scale confrontations which occur at out-of-the-way places. The major technique for establishing and maintaining control of these internal spaces involves the control of time: the more students who are where they are "supposed to be" the fewer number of "problems" are likely to result. Therefore school authorities enforce a rigid time schedule for students during the day of classes. Parents accept this as a legitimate claim and acknowledge the responsibility of staff to regulate the use of space and time within the building.[1] As one black parent noted:

> . . . But this school's allright, though. They make the kids mind, they won't take any stuff. They sent this note home saying what all they'd do with the kids if they were caught doing anything. I know they don't stand for no fighting.

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[1]Recall, however, that we discussed above the concern which some black parents voice about the differential impact of control procedures on their children. Nevertheless, survey data collected by the District have repeatedly shown that neither parents nor students generally believe that race is a consideration in disciplinary matters.

Most parents applaud the efforts to provide a "safe" environment for their students but they recognize that all places may not be equally as "safe". What seems to be important is that their children find at least some places where they will not be bothered and that they find these places quickly. One white parent shared her son's experience:

R: "Listen, the kids like school. My son wouldn't want to leave Pawnee, he wouldn't want to leave Pawnee West. Oh, sure he knows where to go and where not to go, he won't go into the "john" but they learn very quickly, they catch on what's safe and what isn't safe."
I: "I'm sure they do."
R: "But look, even I walk around all the time and I'm not afraid. You know, if you can get parents into the place, into the schools, they find out it's not nearly as bad as they thought it was. You know, they think it's a jungle in here and it's really not like that at all."

This parent seems to be saying that for her and her son the "jungle" becomes less frightening once they find "paths" through it. It is appropriate and necessary for staff to keep these "paths" open.

Students at Pawnee West also speak often about "fights" that make up part of their school experience. One black male student described what these fights are like and how they get started:

I: So how do students get along at Pawnee?
R: They get along good. Like I always hear about fighting in [a neighboring city]. I haven't seen anything like that--you might see a fight here or there but the majority of the time and they might be between black and white. But then again you might just see black and then again you might just see white brothers. So like you really don't see blacks ganging on whites and blacks.
I: Have you seen any fights?
R: I've seen a couple of fights. I've never seen or heard of any school without being in no fight.
I: What usually causes the fight?
R: Somebody getting smart, like running off with the mouth. You know anything could really happen. Some people just don't like white people, and just might jump on them for that, but that is them. Like last year my brother told me they had something in the auditorium, fighting broke out in the stands--before you knew it, it was blacks against whites. Right now I'll be seeing a lot of black people walking with white people so it probably wasn't a big deal--it probably just happened between a couple of

people and he and his so-called friends jumped on some other white dude. That is just the way it is.

I: It just happened like that? It wasn't planned?
R: It ain't never planned; not that I know of.
I: Do you ever get into fights?
R: I try not to.
I: Well do you?
R: I got into one this year. I don't really call that a fight. It was a lot better fight (indecipherable). I asked everybody whose shoe it was (and) he got smart with me--he grabbed my arm and I said "Let go of me" and I just took him and I slammed him into the lockers. He called it a fight and I just wanted to rough the dude up and I wanted to show him--he ran off with the mouth.
I: Are students aware that you demand a certain amount of respect?
R: Like I don't really publicize it. I don't say you've got to have respect for me. I just hope they can see it's the way I react. I ain't going to try and be no bully. Most of my classmates know who I am and know what I do.

For student like this one "roughing dudes up" is an accepted and necessary part of their school life. As white male ninth grader reported:

> Like if someone pushes me and they have no reason--in that case I have to hit him.

However, these students recognize the responsibility of school staff to keep order. The first student quoted above, told us:

I: How do students get along in the classroom?
R: Everything is cool in the classroom. Like if you have a good teacher that's what basically going to bring a whole lot of good students. I see everybody getting along cool--boys and girls, blacks and whites, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, whatever.
I: What if you don't have a good teacher?
R: Usually it will be a student that is upset over something and if somebody says something to them that they don't like then they start an argument then that [leads to a fight].
I: What does the teacher do?
R: It probably will start but then again they might wait till the bell rings and they get out in the hallway and do it. The teacher, the majority of them being strong--healthy--they might break it up; again they might just give them a referral. It is up to the principals--they've done a good job of keeping everybody (in line).

Although some students disagree with the extent to which their lives as students are controlled[1], most seem to agree that it is appropriate for "healthy" teachers

[1] Many students complain in a vague way about there not being enough time to "meet with their friends during the school day". However, observers hear few specific complaints about the length of time between classes and any suggestions that the school day be extended meet with student opposition. Older, high status students have publicly complained about the extent to which staff attempts to control student life in the student produced film, "A Day Without Incident".

and principals to "keep everybody in line".[1] The devices upon which staff rely involve control over time in the building and, thereby, the use of space at Pawnee West.

The use of space and time mechanisms to control behavior in secondary schools is not an unusual phenomena. Schedules serve many functions in addition to physically controlling students. They serve to fractionalize learning through the compartmentalization of knowledge (Cusick, 1973); to control the rhythm and pace of learning by insuring that X comes before Y, hence, regulating "status passage" (Glaser & Strauss, 1971) and, to support the sense of control and authority of key actors in the school situation (Lyman and Scott, 1970). Moreover, control over time tends to become one of the features in student-teacher conflict (Geer, 1966) and aberrant "timetables" are useful in the identification of deviance (Roth, 1963). Finally time may directly affect the quality of hope that indirectly affects motivation (Henry, 1965).

Sommer (1969), Hall (1959), and Dale (1972) have demonstrated the importance of "space" in varied behavior settings. Other investigators have shown that space is crucial in interpreting a child's social world (Wright, 1967) Space influences our image of a social context (Lynch, 1960) and the boundaries of "the territories of self" (Goffman, 1969, 1972).[2]

Our observations yielded evidence that time and space were important features of the social environment at Pawnee West. As a result of the threat of violence that was part of the early phases of desegregation the high school schedule

[1] "Healthy" here, means that the teachers are big and strong enough to enforce their authority with possibly recalcitrant students.

[2] In a broader sense, the ecological theories of The Chicago School relate geographic space to larger social structures through the processes of competition, dominance and succession (Park, 1958; Suttles, 1972) and provide models for thinking about the ways ordering space can reduce uncertainty in urban environments.

was drastically changed: the school day was shortened by eliminating all times when large numbers of students could congregate in any one space, such as, study halls and lunch hours. The attempt was to structure the student use of space through the mechanism of "official time". For our analysis we will distinguish between "student time" which are those periods during the school day when students can exercise some degree of autonomy over how and where they spend their time currency and "official time which are the schedules imposed by staff at West. Most of the participants in Pawnee West do not consciously make such a distinction, but we have found it useful in understanding the negotiations between groups that occur in the building "arena". As we shall see, "student time" often dictates quite different uses of space than does "official time".

Our interest in exploring the time and space dimensions of experience at West is based upon our observation of negotiation and avoidance processes. We believe that we can understand how roles and statuses are established and maintained through an analysis of the dynamic exchanges that occur on these two key dimensions.[1] It is important to note again, however, that the ways in which space and time are perceived at West are probably not very different from those found in other American schools and are not unique because Pawnee is desegregated. We believe racial factors add to the complexity of some of these social negotiations and influence the outcomes in some instances, but this is because race is a "dominant status" in the society at large (Curtis and Jackson, 1977), and no school walls are "hard" enough to screen out dominant social attitudes. Of more interest is the extent to which schools may be able to modify social attitudes to some degree. Our argument in this chapter will be that interactions about "official time" affect the use of space at Pawnee West and determine the extent to which various sets of actors control their social environment.

[1]As noted in chapter one, we do not intend to discuss the meanings of desegregation. However, the concept of integration is generally understood to involve equal status contact (Allport, 1958; St. John, 1975) and we believe that the ties between status and control of time and space are directly related.

The student's day--"official time" and space at Pawnee West

The official day for students begins before 8 o'clock in the morning when the first school buses discharge their passengers either in front or at both sides of the rear of Pawnee West. Most teachers are already at station in their classrooms and a few have been in the building to monitor the activities of early arriving students since shortly after 7 o'clock. Grade principals have been in their offices or patrolling the halls since 6:30 or 7 o'clock getting ready for the day and taking care of business which could not be completed the previous evening. The doors to the high school are open and the monitors are in place as the first bus-loads of students stream through the corridors. From that time on, the time of students is rigidly scheduled.

Upon first arriving, the students may go directly to their lockers in the East or West Commons Areas or stop off for a "couple of drags" in the Smoking Areas. There are a few free minutes to "get ready for the day" before Homeroom and many students use this time to socialize, or retrieve their class materials and books. In warmer weather, many students will sit on the school steps or stand leaning against the walls outside and enjoy a "smoke" or "just talk". The area just outside the building, including the large parking lots which extend to the rear of the school, is an important place for social activity, often illicit.[1]

Groups of white students often are seen sitting in their cars and smoking. On the East side of the building groups of Latinos and blacks, predominantly male, lean against the school walls. On occassion one sees an inter-racial group, often smoking marijuana. There are fewer groups of females than males and almost no "loners". It is not uncommon to see small groups of two or three students.

[1] In effect, these areas are "no-man's land" since the staff cannot adequately patrol them and they are not routinely watched by the city police. The parking lot offers a special refuge for "skippers". If an open automobile can be found or arranged, it can be used for "making out" or "smoking some dope," instead of going to class. An observer was offered several opportunities to engage in these activities once the 9th graders learned he had an automobile. Routine "sweeps" of the parking lots are made by school staff but many offenders manage to avoid detection.

or boy-girl combinations, talking intently outside the building even during class time. One observer describes the scene as follows:

> There is quite a bit of activity this morning in the parking lot. Many groups of 3-4 people; black, white and Latino, were standing by their cars smoking. Farthest down by the building was a white group, probably ten males smoking. The closest group to me was a group of six black males, spread out more than the white group. Along the East wall--not more than 30-40 feet from the entrance, was another group of four black males. In all, there were at least 80-100 kids out in the parking lot. They would be late for homeroom since it was only one minute to the bell.

The official start of the daily routine is Homeroom. This brief (15 minute) period at the start of the day provides an important space and time anchor for students at West. There is an attempt to use this period as a device to provide continuity to the student's career at West; the student keeps the same Homeroom for his/her entire stay at West.[1] During Homeroom, attendance is taken and official school notices are distributed. Announcements are read over the loudspeaker concerning events in the daily schedule (club meetings, team tryouts, etc.) or major activities that are soon to occur (such as upcoming athletic events or school trips). Messages about particularly important events or especially serious occurrences are read by the Head Principal but usually an Assistant Principal or the staff member in charge of the activity handles the announcements.[2] Students recognize that Homeroom is not a time for organized activity and engage in various other pursuits during that period: many simply rest by putting their heads down on their desks; others "catch up" on the news with friends; several play cards or stare aimlessly off in space; a few do their homework. For still others, Homeroom provides an opportunity to complete

[1]Counselors are also assigned by Homeroom and so students can also expect to see the same counselor for their entire stay at West.

[2]There are also "afternoon announcements" during Fifth Hour, just before 1 o'clock and the official end of the school day. Although there is a great emphasis on the importance of these announcements, observers note that most of the time they seem to be ignored by the students, despite admonitions of the teachers "to pay attention".

the morning grooming. For example, it is a mark of high status for black males to have their hair combed out by the girl friends.[1] Rules are more relaxed generally and it is relatively easier to get a pass to "go to the lockers" or "to the bathroom" during this time. Moreover, students often arrive "tardy" either because the school buses were late or because they know "nothing's going to happen" and "homeroom is boring".[2]

Classes are scheduled for the entire school day. Five fifty minute sessions, with five minute breaks between, fill the remainder of a student's time in school. Student behavior in class varies greatly depending upon the teacher and the subject matter being taught. Observers noted that in "advanced" classes or in more difficult subjects the level of student attention was generally higher. In lower level classes, especially those in 9th or 10th grade "required" subjects,[3] student interest is lower and there are more instances of "disruptive" or "inattentive" behavior. We note that in several classes, the teachers seem to be teaching to a relatively small percentage of their students; the remainder of the class seem to be "into their own heads" and pay little attention to the lesson for most of the class time. This seems to be tolerated by the teacher as long as the student does not disturb the other students. What this usually means is that students can sleep but not talk to each other in class.

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[1] It is particularly important for black males to have their hair "combed out" early in the school day since males are not allowed to wear hats in the school building. Black males often wear caps to cover their braided hair and complain that this rule is unfair since it applies only to them. We note that this rule is enforced differently depending upon the particular teacher. In general, black teachers seem among the most consistent enforcers.

[2] The belief that Homeroom serves no useful purpose is shared by many members of the Pawnee West staff who note that the period is not long enough for the teacher to get to know the student very well nor to allow sufficient time for clubs meetings, or counseling sessions. Teachers seem to generally tolerate most activity during Homeroom as long as the noise level does not become unreasonable.

[3] Seventeen credits are required for graduation from high school in Pawnee. The schedules are arranged so that students have progressively more elective courses as they move through the grades. So a freshman at West has only one elective, a sophomore has two, and juniors and seniors may have more depending upon how well they have done in the required subjects.

After fifth hour, the majority of students board their buses and return home. There are activities which are scheduled after school and a sixth hour class. However, bus transportation for these late activities is limited. Many of the students who participate either walk home or have other means of transportation and do not rely upon the school bus.[1]

This then is the student's day. The schedule is an attempt to control the social environment by the effective use of official time. However, as we shall see below, the management of time and space at Pawnee West is more complex and subject to more negotiation than the description of official time suggests.

"Student time" and space at Pawnee West

Many students at Pawnee West accept the limitations which "official time" places on their "student time". For them, "student time" is restricted to the few minutes after the buses arrive in the morning and before they depart in the afternoon and the five minute breaks between classes. The following summary is typical of the normal student day at West.

> Her brother's friend Charlie and Louise and Martha of next door come over and they all come to school together. Her mother drives or else Charlie drives. Then with Louise and Martha she goes to homeroom or to the locker and walks around the school; it sounds like they get there very early. From their locker they go to homeroom and there she has four friends she mentioned--all girls from Jr. High. After this she goes to Gym with two girls, Mary and Sylvia from Jr. High School. 2nd hour she mentioned four people, two boys and two girls and she made a point to saying that they were both blacks and Mexicans and etc. Third hour she has three friends, Chrissy, Jose and Nina--the last two being Mexican and Chrissy absent from school at times. This is History class with Mr. T and today they had a rap session. She kept saying what a free floating rap session it was but on the other hand when I

[1] We were interested in discovering what most students do after classes are dismissed at one o'clock. Many upper classmen have part-time jobs and the active students participate in sports and clubs which meet until at least 2:30 P.M. A few students take a sixth hour class. The majority, however, go home, eat and watch television. They often may have some domestic responsibilities (baby-sitting, cleaning the house, starting dinner) but overwhelmingly watching television is the major activity between 2:00 and 6:00 P.M. Yet students generally are in favor of the tight scheduling and, although complaining of hunger, prefer to get out at one o'clock. Most believe that the "free time" provides them with more opportunities to "do what they want to" and have little desire to stay at West any longer than necessary.

> kept asking what was talked about and what she said, she became very defensive and very antagonistic and so it seemed to be a very taboo area. Although she was quite willing to say that they have these rap sessions. Fourth hour she meets her friend Louis who lives next door and whom she likes the most and this is business and she was ahead of the group and the last hour she has her friends Louise, Kathy, Carla, Mark and Ricky--all of these except Carla who is new to West and new to Pawnee were from Jr. High. When I suggested that most of the friends that she mentioned all were old friends either from Jr. High or from her neighborhood she agreed. She went into great detail of how she met one of Carla's friends in the fifth hour who is a friend of a friend and once again she [seemed] very interested in boys and making acquaintances and told me the story of Charlie who came over to see her brother and joining them for lunch and Charlie playing scrabble and in general this is her biggest interest.

"Student time" is organized around the constraints of "official time" by a series of well organized interactions with particular friends. These friends give a personal meaning to the routines of "official time" so that seeing "Louise, Kathy, Carla, Mark and Ricky" is more important than the course content in fourth hour. Several students more actively seek to expand the amount of time during the regular school day that "belongs to" them. Students are anxious to obtain some degree of autonomy over their lives and to break the monotonous routine which "official time" constrictions impose on their activities. This was well expressed in essays describing a Utopian school in which there were many statements about autonomy. As the teacher who assigned the essay noted:

> I've noticed that when they [the students] wrote these things most of them ask for more freedom, they want to be able to go to the bathroom, walk around, you know. But you couldn't run a school like that. You can't have people waiting around--they'd be in the bathroom all hour.

West students are not different from other secondary school students according to the literature (Freidenberg, 1963; Cusik, 1973) nor, for that matter, do they differ from subordinates in most complex organizations (Etzioni, 1961). The desire for autonomy is a powerful one and becomes particularly acute in a situation where the rewards for conformity are in the long-term and distant future. Many students fail to see the "payoff" to them for tolerating the dictators of "official time" and subvert them for their own ends.

For those students who seek more freedom during the school day Pawnee West offers many avenues of escape from the "official" daily routine. These avenues usually involve violating the uses of space at times and in ways which do not conform to the official definitions. Attempts to increase "student time" seem to make use of two major techniques: negotiation and avoidance which technique is utilized seems to depend upon the bargaining capital of the student involved and the space where time will be spent.

Negotiations for time in the classroom

Negotiations for time usually occur in the classroom. The entire fifty minutes allocated to teachers are seldom spent on instruction; the proportion of that period when teaching occurs depends upon the outcome of the negotiations between the teachers and the students. Students try to restrict the official time in the classroom by many strategies: talking, opening and closing their books, being restless. There are a variety of these behaviors by which students indicate their lack of acceptance of the demands of "official time" for their attention. Moreover, their behaviors are more likely to be displayed at certain points during official class periods.

Time is so deeply involved in the structure of social interaction, that one observer reported a breakdown in activity when the school clocks were out of order. Students appeared to be disorientated, asking eacher other and the teacher frequently, "What time is it?" and generally appearing to be confused. The same observer noted:

> The teacher didn't really start class until 5 or 7 minutes after the bell rang. There is a settling down time in which the kids are allowed to talk and to roam freely. The unfortunate thing is that they don't slow down those five minutes--they speed up during the five minutes. The structure of the class didn't break down until one minute before the bell rang, that is, nobody packed up their books or made a dash to the door. Everybody was ready at 9:13 but there was no packing up early. Class continued right up until one or two minutes before the end of the class with actual work.

Students in this class however, try to shorten class time by ending early.

> With three minutes to go in the class there were at least ten kids crowded around the door waiting to leave, that is the kids are aware of when IT IS TIME TO GET OUT.

Students can "negotiate" more time for themselves by delaying the actual start of teaching in class and by signalling the end of class by packing up their books when they have had enough. Teachers must constantly protect teaching time from student incursions.

More subtle techniques are apparent during the actual time of instruction. Students can resist "official time" constraints by "tuning out" the teacher, by withdrawing from the classroom activities, by coming to the class unprepared with papers, books and other materials, and by causing disturbances. Classroom etiquette seems to imply that a teacher should not bother a student who has put his/her head down on the desk to sleep or because he/she isn't feeling well. One student reprimanded for sleeping in class was offended, saying, "You know, I wasn't bothering anybody."

From the teacher's perspective, this behavior indicates unwillingness to follow directions and prevents learning:

> You were not even paying attention. You even refuse to understand.

> Look, there are two rules that you have to follow in this class; the first you already know, that you have to get to class on time. Then the second rule is that you have to bring your book to class.

> The most important thing you have to learn in school is how to follow directions. If you cannot follow directions, you haven't learned anything."

> You were not even paying attention. You even refuse to understand.

However, we believe such student activity can better be understood as techniques for gaining control over their environment.

One arena in which teachers and students have complex negotiations concerns homework. There is a long-standing debate over the value of homework, since students resist the enfringement on the after-school time. Most teachers resolve the situation by allowing students to begin the homework in class, and those who work quickly, usually finish. The major difficulty with homework is the impossibility of making sure it is finished; although it can effect grades, students have

so many ways to defend not working during "student time" that most teachers make sure there is "official time" provided:

> [The teacher] stated that there weren't any philosphical differences between teaching in junior and senior high school. "teaching is teaching." When asked about homework, however, she allowed that might be one area of difference--in junior high school most assigned work that can be done in class whereas in senior high school work is taken home. (She pointed out that she had taught at both levels and so had had some experience both places.) She reports real difficulty in the area of homework. She assigned 20 problems, 10 of which were completed by a student by the end of the class period. H told this student to complete the assignment at home. The student told her "I don't work at home." She told him that he was supposed to (looking at J and me with a smile) "You know what happened, of course?" The next day he comes to class without his book and the 10 problems which he had done the day before. I try to tell the kids that they should get all their things ready to go in one place. That's a "life skill". But they don't listen. It's hard enough to get them to bring paper and pencils. Now I finally have got them all to have pencils--I have to give them paper by State Law. They just don't think those things are important."

Therefore, we see teachers and students involved in a complex, never-ending negotiation process over control of "official time" in the classroom. Our data indicate that students are able through these techniques effectively to limit the constraints of "official time" and to accumulate more "student time" in their day.

Skipping--avoidance of "official" space

"Official time" at the high school defines the legitimate use of space at West. There are prescribed times when students may go to their lockers, walk the halls or stand in the Smoking Rooms. During these times, these spaces "belong to students". One way in which students attempt to expand the amount of "student time" is by ignoring completely the constraints of "official time" by "skipping". The hard walls of West are simply not powerful enough to hold the students inside. Students report that the important thing is to know when to "cut" or "skip". The essential element in this knowledge is not missing important deadlines or examinations that would put the student in serious jeopardy of "failing the course".

"Skippers" will make it a point to see the teachers or other students in the parking lots to find out when tests are being given and attend class that day. Students selectively cut some classes and attend others, partly in response to how rigid the teacher is in enforcing absences, whether or not they can obtain a legitimate excuse, or whether or not the consequences appear to be severe. For the bright student attendance does not appear to be a problem, as one white staff member complains:

> You know, I don't know if I've told you this before but I think a kid shouldn't pass unless he's there at least 50% of the time. I think that if a kid does well on attest and he's not there you're not teaching him. He shouldn't get a good grade unless he does something. He should produce something ever hour of every day. This idea of passing them if he passes a test even if he doesn't come to class I think teaches them bad habits. They should know that they don't get anything for nothing.

Because it is virtually impossible to track the students, some students are caught and others are not.

> I: I notice the monitor of the halls around here--be where your supposed to be.
> R: Not really. Mostly--when you skip a class it's really not that bad unless you skip it all the time.

Students give many reasons for skipping: boredom, defiance, dislike of a particular teacher or class. One white student informant explained what students do do when they "skip" and why they avoid classes:

> R: Some kids--like they might come first hour, second hour and leave. Some might come first, second, skip third and go to fourth and fifth. Most of the kids just leave here all day. Go up to X Junior High come back here and catch the bus. If you get caught you get kicked out.
> I: Why do you think kids skip?
> R: Boring, classes boring. Some not passing, not trying, just passing. Some want to get away for the day.

They also have many places to go inside the building when they "skip", as another black student explained:

> I: Have you ever skipped classes?
> R: Once I did, it was that man's class. I would get so sick of him I just couldn't take it anymore. That day was a Friday, he was on my case all week so I didn't-- I was walking downstairs from the second floor.
> I: Where on the second floor?
> R: Well lets see. First I was in the bathroom until about ten minutes after the hour waiting for the hall monitors to leave. Then I was on the 4th floor, went down the back stairs to the third floor, 2nd floor and to the 1st floor and went to sit in the bathroom for the rest of the time.

Another suggested the following places to go:

> How do they skip? It is really easy, they have put hall monitors out there now it isn't working because 5 min. after class they leave so all the students have to do is wait 5 min. after they leave and walk around until they see a teacher coming and then leave and they go to the back hall or to the stairs because the teachers never go to the back ones, it's very easy. They keep saying they are going to stop us but they cannot stop us unless they put a person in every hall, every stairs and every bathroom.

"Skippers" often "skip" openly and with little pretense of hiding. One staff member noted:

> Yes, one of the interesting things last year is I'd be in my office and I'd see the school buses arrive and the kids get off and some kids take off across the fields and then at one o'clock when the school buses were loading up the same kids would come back across the field and get on the school bus, they had never been in school all day and what they did, we don't know--we can only imagine. They weren't in their classes.

Data provided for the ninth grade class indicate the pervasiveness of the "skipping" phenomenon. Fully one quarter of all "discipline referrals" and

"class closures" are for "truancy".[1] This proportion must be seen as a conservative estimate of the actual incidence since so many offenders are not caught. One teacher reported what may be a more typical experience at the introductory course level:

> On any day about half my students are absent. Not the same ones everyday.

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[1] Records of "offenses" yield the following breakdowns:

Percent of Discipline Referrals by Category

Class Disturbance	26%
Teacher Threat	
Truancy	25
Not Dressing for PE	11
Insubordination	19
Tardiness	12
Fighting	
Smoking	1
Miscellaneous	2
Total Percent	101%
(Number)	(899)

Percent Class Closures by Category

Smoking	3%
Insubordination	32
Class Disturbance	8
Truancy	26
Not Dressing for PE	4
Fighting	17
Abusive Language	3
Tardiness	3
School Incorrigible	4
Possession	
Miscellaneous	1
Total Percent	101%
(Number)	(158)

Since state law mandates compulsory attendance, the responsibility for attendance is seen as a legal obligation of school authorities. Any student absent is either excused or truant, and serious consequences can follow the latter. A staff member responsible for attendance in the District policy was explained in these words:

> A registered letter goes after 15 absences in one or five classes. Most parents wish they had known immediately. They're pretty much willing to do everything after they know. They would've stopped it if they had known all along. However, the reasons are as varied as the kids. Some patterns go way back. We hope to stop this as we begin to deal with younger kids. Another pattern is that every time there is a major change we notice that there is an increase in skipping. I guess the primary reason that we see is that there is no care or ownership. Nobody takes responsibility. And remember the new attendance policy did not start until January. The size of West terrifies kids. They're not treated at all. There's no real effort to make them feel a part of the school. Some kids have a problem with one teacher, they come to us and they complain about being with a teacher that they can't get along with. You know, they get into a class and can't get out. They are scheduled in because of something that happened last year. They skip because they are unsatisfied. Kids who are angry are in the minority. None are transferred exactly, some are sent back for schedule change. Those are problems which were you know, caused before I got around. If you miss 15 days a teacher can deny credit. That's the Board policy, to deny credit if kids miss 15 days. We don't know whether or not teachers operate on that basis, but those 15 days are accumulative. Not 15 days consecutively. But those kids who are greater than 16 will meet with them if we can find them. However, we really don't have any option. If the kid is willfully truant and under 16 and if the parent is out of control then we can refer to the court. However there's no backup for kids who are over 16.

Considerable administrative and teacher time is consumed in matters of attendance: teachers call the parents after five absences; after ten absences a counselor calls; after 15 the grade principal confers with the parent and they are to develop a program to maintain attendance. However the procedure doesn't work as smoothly as it sounds:

> . . . You know, unfortunately they're swamped. . . if nothing is done before 10 to 15 absences. You know, the agencies for referral, things like youth assistance really don't get involved at the ten day level. You know there's not much to do unless there's some kind of complaint.

Both formally and informally, staff continually attempts to reinforce the necessity for regular attendance.

Principal: "How come you're not in class? You're not gonna make it. No--. Get to class".
Female: "What are you talking about?"
Principal: "You're goofing off."
Student: "I am not."
Principal: "Yep. Your not going to make it. Bad news."
Student: "I haven't skipped."

In this case, the student is told directly that attendance is linked to "making it", i.e., staying in school. For many students, this message is ignored. They are able to accumulate more "student time" for themselves by avoiding "official space." It is important to repeat again that this kind of behavior appears to occur in most secondary schools according to the educational literature and is not a special phenomenon of West. Since it is virtually impossible to quantify with any degree of accuracy the extent to which it takes place, it is not possible to argue definitively whether or not it is more of a problem at West than another school. We can say with some degree of confidence that skipping is a common phenomena; and, that many students are expelled on this basis alone.

Avoidance in student space--socialization into the culture of violence

Part of the adaptation process in any institution is feeling like one belongs: finding a "place" and learning what is expected of the person in that place. At West this is part of the socialization process that newcomers--usually ninth graders undergo. An important part of student learning is to know what are safe places--and when. We find that avoidance mechanisms function at Pawnee West to organize social environments during "student time".

Ninth graders often remark that "I don't have any trouble here" or "no one hassles me" or "We have less trouble here than other schools do." In exploring these comments it appeared that "trouble" referred to inter-racial fights. These usually occur in the smoking room or locker area between classes and are attributed to "crowding": "There are just too many people: some one bumps into someone and a fight starts." The understood rules for behavior are: mind your own business and avoid risks. One black female student explained it as follows:

> I heard a little about fights--my sisters told me. It didn't really scare me, I am just cautious and make sure I don't get into any trouble. I mind my own business, my mother always told me just mind your own business and you won't get in no trouble.

We find considerable evidence of anticipatory socialization from older students and siblings consisting of warnings not to go to certain places alone, and importantly, to mind one's own business if trouble started. Examples are:

> I was scared to come to this school at first, but then when I came it wasn't bad. Like they would tell us there's a lot of riots out there, and then when we came nothing happened.

> Well, I just don't start trouble. I don't like to fight. I just talk--I walk away.

> Ya there are rules about what to do and not to do . Get in class before the bell rings. Try not to get two referrals, you might get kicked out. Don't skip and stay away from fighting--you know--people who like to get in trouble.

> I heard different things [about West] before I got here . Like I heard how Pawnee West is always having fights and how much trouble there is and how you're going to get approached by people selling drugs--really that much hasn't happened. Occasionally you see one [a fight] at the back stairwells or something but not that bad.

It seems that the reputation of Pawnee West which preceeds students' entry into the high school leads to the expectation that "things will be really bad up there". The fact that these expectations outstrip the reality of the students' "lived experience" does not diminish the importance of place which the avoidance of violence seems to play in a student's life at West.

Avoidance is made more necessary and more difficult by the crowding that occurs at certain times and places. The halls in particular were seen as troublesome areas because of the crowding. One teacher reported:

> You know some teachers wanted to have fewer kids in the halls. They said something to administration. They were told that there weren't kids in the halls because of the hall guards. Some teachers were amazed at this. They were told hall guards made a complete circuit every hour. This really surprised them since they never get off their papers, their butts. But they [administration] don't want to hear those things.

Another reason that the halls are crowded is, in part, because the main stairs are over-utilized since students avoid the back stairs and more secluded parts of the building. One white female vividly described the risks which may be involved in using "out-of-the-way" spaces in West.

> Bob [her boyfriend] got jumped here before already. He was going down the stairs to the second floor and I guess there was three black people and Bob's friend Jack was with him. But when the black dudes came after him, he took off and one of the other black dudes started fighting him and hit him in the back and they beat him with a billy club. Bob's friend just ran and Bob was pretty mad about it and he said he was knocked out for a couple of minutes--he was sore and that. He then got up, I guess, and went home. I didn't see him come to school for a couple of days.

Although these incidents are not frequent, students hear of them and avoid such places to reduce the risk of harm to themselves. The result is crowded central halls and stairways.

> Too many people. I almost missed my bus--can't get in the locker room. Crowded. I have to run to catch the bus. They'd leave. People bump you in the halls. Crowded.

> Me, myself, I get along with people, but some of them don't you know. Bumping in the halls. Some will say excuse me--but some get all hostile and everything.

In trying to explain what happens in crowded halls students frequently used the term "hassle".[1] To "hassle" someone is to purposefully annoy or provoke the other, and is somewhat related to the concept of teasing, only more includes actual physical pushing and persistent annoyance deliberately intended to upset the other person. This behavior is often directed at someone of the opposite race. One black female student told us how this process works:

> I: You have never been shoved, pushed or hassled in any way? Do you see that happening to other people? When is it likely to happen--is it more likely to happen some times than others?
> R: When you walk down the hall and there are a lot of people they just push you out of the way. You just keep going.
> I. Is there any particular reason why that happens or does it just happen?
> R: It just happens. I don't know.

---

[1]Students are not the only ones subject to "hassling" and feats of mild provocation of teachers can enhance a student's status with his/her peers. One observer noted this in a classroom interaction.

> He then went up and opened the teacher's desk up and grabbed a pen--looked like the teacher's red marking pen out of the desk and proceeded to use that for the entire class period. . . . At the end of the class to conclude this relationship the pen needed returning PF put it back in the teacher's desk and then came over to George and said, "I just put the pen back in the teacher's desk and he didn't say nothing." He seemed proud of the fact that he took something from the teacher's desk and the teacher didn't catch him for taking it, I guess. He was very proud of himself and he reported that to George.

I: Is it more likely to happen if you're black or white? Or does it matter?
R: Mostly happens to white people.
I: Why is that? Do you know?
R: I don't know. Like if a black hits another black they know they will get hit back but if they hit a white they just keep on going. . . .
I: So if a black pushes another black person they are liable to get hit?
R: Ya.
I: If a black person pushes a white person--they will kind of let go?
R: Ya.
I: Is that how it seems?
R: Ya.
I: Why do you think that white people let it go?
R: I don't know. [The blacks] ought to get smacked if they push. . . [the whites] look like they are mad but I don't know. . .

Students reported that there was considerable "hassling" in the halls, sometimes with definite racial overtones. For example, a boy and a girl walking along talking would be split apart by another student walking between them; groups of students would dominate hall space horizontally, or bump into people. Our observations tended to substantiate the student testimony above that black students usually provoked these instances and most whites ignored them, continuing on their way. Black students volunteered the observation that most white students would not respond to hostility on the part of blacks but tried to avoid confrontations.

> . . . I have never been hassled. It's especially the white kids. You know they are really scared. There was an assembly for Black Awareness in the fieldhouse, and there were some white kids that got out of their class to go to the assembly but when they found out there was just going to be blacks there, they skipped class.

Just as joking behavior provides status clues since only equals can afford to joke with each other, it appeared that those white students most comfortable with blacks and least afraid in the situation would not tolerate space intrusion. Generally, however, whites did not respond. A similar phenomena was noted between younger students, both black and white, and older students: the higher status upper classmen had more freedom to invade space and the lower classmen

> We don't usually have fights in here [Pawnee West], sometime people beat up on each other like a couple of blacks against whites or a couple of whites against blacks. Sometimes the smoking room gets too crowded and fights start in there. Everybody gets in. Locker Rooms--everybody gets on top of the lockers, throwing chairs when they fight. I just keep away from there.
>
> I: When do you see your friends?
> R: During school
> I: What about between classes?
> R: In between classes and then in the locker room.
> I: Do you go down to the smoking room?
> R: No. I don't like to smoke. In between fights and fire. . . A girl caught her hair on fire just last week.
> I: How do you think that happened?
> R: I don't know.
> I: People have fights in there too?
> R: There was a fight in there yesterday.
> I: Why do you think that it happens?
> R: It gets too crowded and somebody dumped ashes and didn't say excuse me.
>
> I never hear until they start fighting. I don't go the the smoking room. I don't smoke so I just don't go there. Probably a lot of things [happen] down there. I was walking down the hall one day and a whole bunch of dudes started running down the hall and I moved out of their way. They all ganged up on this one dude. Teachers tried to break it up but they all got away.

By staying away from the smoking room, the student can minimize the risk of being "hassled" or "getting into fights."

The utility of avoiding certain locations is a fairly general pattern among Pawnee high school youth. In its yearly Senior High Student Attitude Survey, the Research and Evaluation Department asked a random sample of almost 1000 (N=922) students about the relative safety of different locations in the school building. Almost half (45 percent) responded that there was at least one place which students avoided "because someone might hurt or bother them

there." Almost one-third (32 percent) of students listed two or more such "unsafe" places.[1]

[1]For Pawnee West students the distribution of responses shows a consistently higher avoidance rate for whites than for blacks.

Places Avoided by Pawnee West Students

(Percent "Yes" to question "Do you stay away from any of the following places because someone might hurt or bother you there?")

	Total	Whites	Blacks
Smoking area	27 (412)	28 (209)	26 (203)
School restrooms	23 (419)	33 (209)	12 (210)
Hallways or stairs	21 (417)	25 (210)	16 (207)
School parking lot	17 (414)	17 (210)	18 (204)
School Commons	16 (419)	21 (209)	12 (210)
Any school entrance	12 (416)	13 (210)	11 (206)
Shortest route to school	7 (420)	7 (210)	8 (210)
Other places	21 (415)	25 (210)	16 (205)

We note that significantly more whites than blacks avoid school restrooms, hallways and stairs, and the commons areas--the latter two high risk hassling areas according to our informants.

More students may not avoid the crowded spaces in the building because of the social function which these places serve in "student time". For many students, the smoking rooms are good places to meet their friends who may have classes in different parts of the building. Habitues also develop defensive strategies against the more violent forms of "hassling" that may occur. One student described her behavior in the smoking room:

> I: What is it like in the smoking room between second and and third hour? Because you said earlier it was crowded and there is . . .
> R: It is still crowded and everything but I still go there and talk to my friends and try to get out and someone will be pushing on you, taking a cigarette and burning your pants and you don't know it. Turn around and take your cigarette or burn your hair. I just like to take a couple of drags and go back in my room.
> I: But in the smoking room is there a particular place where you usually go? When you go in there is there a kind of spot that you go to?
> R: Against the wall.
> I: Is there a particular reason for that?
> R: If you stand in the middle, in the center of the room, you would be pushed down and knocked down. If you go to the wall, they just bump into you and you won't be knocked down.

Like many others this white female has learned to accomodate herself to the reality of the smoking room. She knows where to stand to reduce risks to herself and she can enjoy the company of her friends.

In addition to these spatial accomodations white students also learn that certain affective accomodations are more tolerable than others. In the student world of Pawnee West, a "low profile" pays off in aiding the student in avoiding "trouble". A white female told us:

> R: It depends on who you are, if you ask for trouble. . . .
> I: How do you ask for trouble?
> R: By fooling around and being boss; if you act higher and push, then you ask for trouble. You must be not better than anybody else.

By "being boss" and acting as if they are "better than anybody else", students become targets for "hassling" and "trouble" from their peers. This particular

student has no difficulty accepting this equalitarian ethic.

Staff members at Pawnee West also observe the patterns of hassling which occur frequently within their sight. They see the acceptance of this behavior by whites as one of the consequences of desegregation. However, some see changes occurring in the pattern.

> I tell you one thing--white kids aren't taking as much guff. You know I had a black girl stand up in one of my classes. She turned around and said, "Why do you Honkies take stuff from us? You don't have to. You know that if someone takes your pencil, you don't have to put up with that. You wouldn't if it was a white person."

According to this staff person, "brighter students" understand this already and are better able to work out relationships with students of other races.

Avoidance, then, seems to be an important process in dealing with the student social environment at Pawnee West. It is a useful technique to apply in expanding the amount of "student time" during the regular day beyond the contraints of "official time". Moreover, staying away seems an effective strategy in dealing with the complex student to student interactions that characterize the environments during "student time".

Avoidance and extra-curricular events--the social environment of informal "student time"

We have described in some detail the mechanism of avoidance as it applies during the regular school day. Our observations indicated that such avoidance mechanisms do not end with classes and traces can be found throughout the entire range of school-related activities. In this section we will outline the patterns of avoidance which characterize extra-curricular activities and other events in non-school "student time".

Avoidance behavior is particularly noticeable in the area of interpersonal relations among students of different races. In both formal and informal arenas, the established pattern seems to be for students of different races to remain separate. Our informants indicated that strong pressures are exerted by peers to limit "crossing over", that is, acting as if the person is a member of a different race. We found very few instances of attempts to resist this pressure among students.[1]

Student perceptions of the racial composition of various athletic teams is indicative of the pervasiveness of the avoidance mechanisms which produce dramatic separations in student activities. Several students told us that certain athletic teams were the domain of particular racial groups. For example, "everybody knows" that the basketball team is black. The one white player on the team was introduced at Pep Assemblies as "the Great White Hope". Likewise, swimming and golf are "white sports".[2] Wrestling is "integrated" with about equal numbers of blacks and whites participating. Football is also a sport with about equal numbers of students of both races but there are more subtle differences by position.[3] In general these patterns are seen by students and some others as reflecting the inherent abilities an interests of particular racial groups.

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[1]Our classroom observations reveal, interracial student contact only occurring around some specific, time-limited task.

[2]A count of the numbers of students of different races in team pictures in several past yearbooks reveals that there is some validity to these perceptions. What is more difficult is the assignment of direction of causality in these patterns.

[3]One of the most integrated activities at West is Band. Students in Band seem the most relaxed in interracial contact even though much pride is taken in the "black sound" which West's Band has.

Seating patterns at athletic events and Pep Assemblies also reflect the avoidance mechanisms of students. It is not uncommon for the stands to be segregated informally into black and white sections. Actors understand this separation that exists in the Pawnee community. We would agree with this interpretation and note the extent to which the attendance of families brings community pressures into the stands. Students who attend with their families may be more constrained by the presence of family members whose sensibilities would be offended by too open contact with members of a different race. We do not note these patterns to indicate that school staff are primarily responsible. Our point is that the avoidance which maintains racial separation of Pawnee West students at an interpersonal level seems to be part of the social structure of Pawnee and public events are occasions in which the strength of the separation is manifested.

Pressures for avoidance and separation are also felt at a more individual level. Many informants reported the difficulties involved for students who have friends or "date" members of another race. A graphic example of this phenomenon appeared as part of a student produced film which addressed the experience of integrated education in Pawnee high schools. In this scene a black cheerleader is shown talking with four or five white cheerleaders. She is "discovered" by a group of black students who ridicule her for "wanting to be like them." Reluctantly the black cheerleader turns her back on her fellow black students and returns to her discussion with the white students. The message is clear. This black girl has been forced to choose and either choice has its costs. The film's producers see this as an unfortunate consequence of "integrated education" that they hope students will eventually outgrow.

It is significant that a cheerleader was chosen to illustrate this point since such "cultural maximizers" are most likely to be able to eschew the

avoidance mechanisms that govern most students. The interracial contact in the Band we described above is possible because of the high status which Band members have at West and because the Band constitutes a "closed" society within West that supports its own norms.[1] More typical is the experience of a white male senior at West who reported that he rigidly avoids any contact with his black female girlfriend at any school-related function. He is only able to see her at times completely removed from "student time".

Even high status is no guarantee of protection against reprisals for violating the rules of avoidance. One black female who was active and visible in student life at West was seriously beaten by her former black boyfriend for associating with a white male. Although such incidents as this are unusual and dramatic, they do illustrate the risks that are involved for students who defy the accepted understandings that govern student life at the high school.

One event early in our field work threw the operation of the avoidance mechanisms among students into sharp relief. The event was first Homecoming Dance to be held in several years. We discussed in an earlier chapter the extent of the security precautions for the dance. Here we will present a description of the observer at the dance which shows how avoidance created, in effect, two separate dances--one for whites and another for blacks. The pattern of student behavior was such that they alternately used the same space but almost never interacted.

> It was long after, students began to arrive that a very clear clear pattern of segregation manifested itself. The side of of the room on which I was sitting was white. The side of the room opposite, that was black. The tables on the side of the room where I was were largely occupied by white students.

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[1] A mark of the high status which the Band has in Pawnee and in Pawnee West is the amount of attention which fans pay to half-time entertainment at games.

> Males and females clustered around those tables. Toward the front of the room it was all students toward the Band. The farther away from the Band were some faculty and some black faculty and parents. Conversely on the other side of the room was largely black. Twenty tables on the opposite side of the room, only three had any whites at them. One of those three was a table of chaperones who were white. One was a table of all white students and at one table there were both blacks and whites. However, in only three out of twenty of the tables were any whites. Whites to the extent that they danced, danced to the white music--the white band; blacks to the extent that danced, danced to the black band. At one point, later in the evening, a black student was walking across the floor of the field house right after the big band stopped playing and before the black small group began and hollered out "Maybe now we can have some music we can dance to". I was struck by the symbolic quality of the bands. The white band seemed to be from a different era; an era of much more comfortable to the faculty. The black band although much more clearly of a black identification were much more into their own kind of music and not primarily geared to satisfying the audience for that dance. Consequently there was very little dancing. I believe one of the big band numbers was a rather slow tune late in the evening about 11:30 or 11:45 P.M. where a good number of faculty and several white couples danced to. Also, much later in the evening there was some dancing when the black group played. However, at no point was the dance floor in any way full.

The pattern was clearly defined with blacks at one side of the fieldhouse, dancing occasionally and exclusively to the "black band" and whites at the other side dancing to the "white band". One black male ninth grader was observed standing at the door to the "white side" of the fieldhouse, hesitating over his decision where to sit. He stood a few moments looking things over, shrugged and made his way to the "black side" of the gym. The message seems to have become clear to him--each group has its well-established space. The vast expanse of fieldhouse floor reserved but not much used for dancing seemed small in comparison to the social structural gap that separates the races in Pawnee.[1]

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[1]In the next year, in an attempt to be more responsive to the musical tastes of the students, the Homecoming Dance was a "disco party" hosted by a local disc jockey from a black radio station. The dance was much better attended but was clearly "black". The observer counted fewer than a dozen whites in attendance.

We have presented a description of the operation of avoidance mechanisms that operate to keep blacks and whites separated in the informal periods of "student time" as well as during more formal school routines. We have argued that these avoidance mechanisms serve to protect students from the overt and covert pressures that support racial separation in Pawnee. In the next section we will discuss some of the costs that are associated with the avoidance mechanisms.

Positive Coping Strategies

It would be a mistake to view the management of space and time as strictly negative coping mechanisms. Even avoidance may be useful at times, because it allows students to pick and choose occasions for meeting which they judge to be more positive. For example, we found many instances of students selecting one person from the opposite race as a person to know better. By dealing with desegregation on a limited, one-to-one basis, the student tried to understand the person in a more manageable, and personal framework. Almost every survey of student behavior showed that students had one black or white friend, but such statements were unreliable because the term "friend" could mean a casual acquaintance or a deep relationship. In our observations and discussions, however, we frequently encountered the latter as a deliberately maintained strategy for coping with desegregation.

The most effective coping mechanism, was involvement with others in a common task. This could be academic, social, athletic or even illegal sharing of drugs, bi-racial contacts increased significantly when students shared not only time and space, but common activities within these dimensions. For example, students in the college preparatory programs reported many more bi-racial contacts than those in less demanding academic programs. We

observed these students sharing homework, problems, studying together, preparing assignments and "sharing" the classroom experiences. Athletic activities, on mixed teams, also led to many bi-racial contacts.

But for many students, school is not an exciting and stimulating experience. They do not find either classrooms or the official school culture of clubs, athletics and sponsored activities interesting, and do not participate in anything. As long as they do not cause disciplinary problems and put forth a minimal academic effort to pass, they are let alone. One could say the official school system "avoids" them - and they, in turn - follow the same avoidance and non-involvement strategies with the school-including classmates. Bi-racial contacts among these students is low. In simple terms, then, coping strategies that deal most successfully with race are bi-products of dealing with other concerns at school. Successful students are more successfully desegregated.

The consequences of avoidance

Using space and time avoidance mechanisms does reduce uncertainty and assist persons in managing their social environments. However, these mechanisms are dysfunctional to the extent that they limit opportunities for growth and development. They allow one to avoid challenges to personal order which facilitate growth: fear restricts inquiry and seeking and learning experiences are made less effective and exciting. For example, teachers who use space to keep a safe social distance between themselves and students contribute considerably to the routine character of many classroom experiences. Students are expected "to come up" for assistance. Because moving about is such rare teacher behavior, it is often considered "patrolling" by students. Our records contain many instances of observer surprise when a teacher walked around a class-

room and actually smiled. Students who avoid others have fewer bi-racial contacts and the ones they have are essentially undifferentiated. We have noted that bi-racial contacts increase when students have a common task to perform in a classroom or are on a team together with a group purpose. The avoidance mechanisms allow students to choose not to participate in bi-racial contacts where this groups purpose is absent. Consequently for many black and white students at West, the motivations of their fellow students remain mysterious or are explained by simplistic generalizations gathered from partial understandings borrowed from the adult world in which they live.

Ordinary classrooms at West provided few structured opportunities for on-going bi-racial contact because many of the control mechanisms require rigid time and space ordering. Since many students avoid making the initial moves to stimulate informal associations during "student time" and in "student spaces", the actual amount of bi-racial contact is limited. Those students who did not avoid these experiences regarded these experiences as the most successful part of their education. For example:

I: What do you like most of Pawnee West?
R: Different people in general. If you can meet other people you can better cope with them.
I: People with different backgrounds---
R: Ya.

We observed several students resolving the difficulties of adopting avoidance mechanisms as a general strategy and trying to understand someone of the opposite race by dealing with one individual on a one-to-one basis. They would tell us clearly of this one friend and the ways in which such a relationship was a learning experience. Those who actively coped with students in another race, particularly in extra-curricular activities, reported that they were stronger because of the challenge and had gained a new perspective. Unfortunately, many students do not perceive the opportunities as clearly as the dangers which such contacts involve. These students adopt avoidance tactics that interfere with learning and their personal growth, as well as perpetuating a racial separation that seems a dominant characteristic of Pawnee West and Pawnee itself.

Summary

The ways in which time is structured to organize social relations at West are not unique because the school is desegregated. Race complicates some features of the negotiations that arise within this structure. The more frequent invasions of personal space by blacks than whites tends to be viewed with displeasure and fear by whites, and as a threat by the staff. This means that black students are more likely than white students to be called "disruptive" since time and space management are considered legitimate staff activities, students violating accepted rules have few appeals or justifications to support their behavior. High status students of both races can manipulate time and space more acceptably, and this leads to charges of arbitrary rule enforcement among many low status students. So much attention is given to time and space management that it becomes the central activity for many staff members. It is so widely accepted as necessary, normal and important that there are no questions about its effect upon learning, except for rearrangements of "official time".

Most importantly, since time and space management are the ways in which school social organization is maintained, those students who do not understand the importance of career tracks, scheduling, school rules, and the unofficial "etiquette" observed in everyday interaction, are highly disadvantaged in terms of surviving in the school environment. Efforts to run smoothly and to avoid disruption to the routine may have long-lasting educational consequences, not the least is teaching students to "get by" by avoidance, conformity, and passive acceptance of "the way it is done here".

The Rhetoric of Desegregation--Building Trust in a Bi-racial High School

> People would say, "Race isn't a problem anymore" and tell the researchers that they did not talk about it easily. We hear frequently that race did not really matter and that we were wasting our time and energy asking about race relations.

Introduction

Five years after the Federal Courts found Pawnee Schools responsible for a pattern of de jure segregation and ordered a program of school busing to "achieve racial balance in the schools", desegregation no longer seems to be an urgent concern in Pawnee. However, the elimination of predominantly black and predominantly white schools has not diminished the importance of race as a factor in the education of Pawnee youth. Pawnee West High School was not directly affected by the desegregation plan because it "has always been desegregated" but race remains a dynamic and complicating feature of the everyday negotiations in the building. In this chapter we will discuss how "talk about desegregation" disguises the importance of race in the "lived experience" of Pawnee West.

There are several reasons for the persistent importance of race. Firstly, the institution of court-ordered busing in Pawnee was the occasion for violent confrontations between blacks and whites. As St. John (1975) points out, the patterns set at the initial phases of desegregation often have powerful impacts on the outcomes of the desegregation process. Secondly, no school walls are "hard" enough to keep out the assumptions that most members of a community accept about race relations. The dominant cultural perceptions of race in the community are carried into West and influence the understandings of the world that guide the behavior of actors. Thirdly, race and poverty are frequently confused. Many of the problems associated with poverty are automatically attributed to race, whether or not the two conditions are actually the same in any given situation: there is no doubt about the level of poverty in Pawnee but not all poor people in the city are black.

Fourthly, there is a widespread belief, in spite of evidence to the contrary, that desegregation has caused a decline in academic achievement. Although achievement patterns throughout the nation show decline, even in segregated schools, many believe that this is a special condition in Pawnee. Finally, there is still a strong tension in American society about race, and many express a deep seated fear that racial conflict could erupt at any moment, whether or not there are immediate grounds for such a concern.

The persistence of race as a factor in the Pawnee schools present staff at Pawnee West with two related but seemingly contradictory problems. The ever-present threat of violence dictates strong control measures which are aimed at reducing the potential for confrontations. The need for these controls is clearly stated by one of the officials at West:

> Look, you have to remember for the past ten years the chief mandate from the Superintendent and the Board of Education was not to let the kids hurt each other. We were responding to that and that's important. The safety of the clientele was the primary concern of the school.

The response at Pawnee West to this "chief mandate" is to rely upon the "hard walls" to "screen out" those external influences that disturb order in the building and to manage internal space by carefully controlling "student time". These techniques are designed to reduce the level of fear among people at West. Fear of violence was especially noticeable among white parents during the initial phases of the desegregation plan.[1] The comments of students and parents which we presented in the previous chapter indicate that the control devices are moderately successful--the level of concern for safety seems manageable for at least many of the white clients of West. The imposition of these controls, however, detracts attention from the major goal of the schools, education, and

[1]One informant told us that the decision to abolish the traditional junior high schools and to establish single grade buildings in their place was in response to the fear which white parents had that older and bigger black children would "pick on" the younger and smaller white students.

serves to reduce the level of trust which the community is willing to place in the effectiveness of its schools to deliver appropriate learning experience.

Trust is an important factor in conducting the everyday activities of client-serving organizations (Bidwell, 1970). This trust involves more than the activities of any individual in the school context. McDermott (1977) points out:

> Trust is not a property of persons but a product of the work people do to achieve trusting relations, given particular institutional contexts.

As we noted earlier, many parents in the black community mistrust the efforts of school officials in Pawnee to control students and interpret the emphasis on control mechanisms as a failure to teach their children. One black parent comments:

> Some of the teachers I don't think even teach them anything. The kids just probably come in the room and sit down and if they don't do anything, then the teachers don't bother them. Then this attitude rubs off on the kids. [My son] has told me time and time again, "It doesn't matter if I'm late. I'm not going to be doing anything anyway. We don't do anything in homeroom". That's what he said. He said they don't do anything in homeroom. . . .

For this parent, not doing "anything in homeroom" reinforces a mistrust of the ability of the schools to provide preparation for the adult world. An important feature of contemporary race relations is the strong belief among black Americans that whites are not trustworthy. The historic experience of black Americans provides little to challenge this attitude and it is one that many black people in Pawnee share.[1] The identification of the schools as white institutions in Pawnee persists among the black community and prevents commitment to the educational organizations. Therefore, although there is a high degree of confidence among Pawnee blacks in the utility of education in general, there is a persistent suspicion about any particular school building.

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[1]For example, one reaction to the reports of low black male achievement is that the schools in Pawnee are unable to "relate to black males" in ways that will enable them to learn.

Two problems, then, seem to confront school officials at Pawnee West: the problem of guaranteeing the safety of their clients and the problem of providing a quality education experience for the students at West. The situation is complicated by the fact that the interest of different racial groups lead to different interpretations of the devices which staff implement to solve each problem. The task that confronts West staff is to find ways of building trust while at the same time reducing fear through control mechanisms. We believe that this has been accomplished through the use of a "rhetoric of concern" whose "wide fan of messages" appeals to both communities of interest. We will explain this rhetoric in some detail below and illustrate the use of this language from our data.

A rhetoric of concern

The "realistic" function of rhetoric, according to Kenneth Burke (1969:43) is to provide "a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols." In speech of this kind, the intent of the communication goes beyond simply transmitting the manifest content of the message. Rhetoric, thus, takes on the quality of ritual:

> [Rhetoric] says something about the speaker, the spoken-to, and the situation, which goes beyond the surface message. (Parkin, 1975:114)

The eliciting of "a cooperative response from the audience" is often the purpose "beyond the surface message". Although the term has been used to connote manipulation of others (Hovland and others, 1953), rhetoric does not necessarily imply a negative outcome. In situations of intense disagreement, an appeal to rhetoric may produce consensus and a lessening of internal conflict within a given system. Parkin (1975:117) summarizes the features which make rhetoric effective.[1]

[1]Parkin's (1975) analysis involves the differing levels of abstractness in "ideologies", "plans" and "quasi-plans". He argues that as consensus emerges the level of abstractness in the surface messages declines in the political context. We will not concern ourselves with the relative specificity of messages in the school context and we will deal primarily with the rhetoric that supports the most abstract messages.

> . . .the surface messages contained in the verbal pronouncements . . . are conspicuous for their lack of specificity; their ambivalent and sometimes contradictory exhortations; and, by offering a wide-range of interpretations, their communicability to otherwise disparate elements in population.

We will use the term rhetoric to refer to the formalized content of many speech acts of actors at Pawnee West.[1] The formalized content is very general in nature and is consistent with a wide range of meanings. The staff at Pawnee West have come to rely upon non-specific and ambiguous language to describe their activities as a response to the often conflicting demands placed upon them by the black and white communities in Pawnee.

What we call a "rhetoric of concern" is to be found in the variety of messages that tell the various Pawnee West publics that "caring" about students is essential for an effective education. These messages are both positive and negative and are used both to justify and to criticize the activities of key participants in the education of students. We frequently heard staff people remark that "We are trying our best for the children" or "We really care about kids here". The statements vary little and all make some mention of the deep concern of the staff for the well-being of the students at West. The formalized content of these messages includes fundamental societal values about education, schools, teaching and parenting that transcend any particular situation in which they are uttered. These messages appeal to a "lowest common communication factor" which even the most disparate elements of the Pawnee community share.

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[1] It is more common to use rhetoric to apply to a formalized manner of presentation (Bl[illegible], 1975). However, our data indicate that although the manner of presentation varies, substantially the same content appears throughout the range of messages. The quality of this speech which relies upon accepted "recipes" that are unquestioned is what we hope to capture by calling this language rhetoric.

Moreover, the rhetoric seems to be used unconsciously by the actors at West and we have no evidence that the formalized content is not believed by the speakers. The "talk about caring for students," however, is characterized by generalization whose very ambiguity smoothes over any inherent inconsistencies and, thus, protects the speaker from contradiction.

We were continually struck by the consistency with which the rhetoric of concern was used by participants in the school arena to describe their reactions to events. Concern for students' best interest motivates this staff members' resistance to a proposed change in the scheduling procedure:

> Like this mini-course business; you know, that worked well at a 9th grade school but I'm not convinced that it would work here and that I really fought against. . . . I don't think kids learn in them. . . . You know the argument that's made is that the kids have a free choice, but really the only justification is the kids don't have to put up with things that they don't like. You know, if you don't like a teacher, you only have to put up with him for ten weeks. That may be true but that certainly isn't an educational justification. Kids do not necessarily have a choice in terms of really learning. That's what this game is all about. . . .

It is a mark of this person's concern for "what's best for kids" that leads him to resist pressures to change the scheduling of classes at West. However, a very similar language of concern is used by others who insist the present scheduling mechanisms are ineffective. According to one teacher, the prevailing but misguided notion of what students need results in poor academic performance.

> There are still some good kids but they aren't prepared to do the work. Counselors are part of the problem. If you talk to counselors, talk to an <u>honest</u> counselor, they'll tell you. (I did not ask her who was an honest counselor.) [They] tell kids and counselors that if they think they will get a B or C in a college prep course, they should take a general course where they will get an A. It doesn't matter that the kid will be bored stiff. It's so far below him he doesn't pay attention and doesn't get the A anyhow.

Both actors appeal to the same rhetoric in making their case. They may disagree about the specific issue at hand, but in terms of the basis on which the decisions should be made, they are in harmony.

The pervasiveness of this rhetoric is indicated by the fact that staff are not alone in using language of this kind in understanding events that occur at West. An active West parent sees her entire life in terms of "caring" for students:

> . . .whenever I see kids and I know they need help, I'm there. Almost all the kids in Pawnee know me. You know when you care about people they just come around. That's how I've made my life. Caring about people . . . .

"Being there" and "caring" are important social values but their application in any particular instance may not be straightforward. For example, the control mechanisms in Pawnee West are a response to "the chief mandate . . . not to let kids hurt eacher other." Another staff member explained to a group of students that:

> The people in the halls are really there to keep strangers out--its for your own good.

However, students look for different indicators of concern from the West staff. One white female told us of a teacher who "cares":

> . . . like you'll be running down the hall from someone because somebody is chasing you for skipping or something and you'll pass his room and you will jump in the room. He'll hide you. They come in and say has he been there? "No". As soon as they turn around he'll let you out. He'll cuss you out. . . but you know if you don't like a situation that you are in a class and you are not going to the class and you are not getting along with the teacher and if you go on there and talk to him about it, he is not going to fake about it and tell well you have this for your class and this is a necessary thing to do in life and everything. He is going to say, yeah, maybe this thing may not be for you, but the way life is you got to play the role so you got to fake your way through it some kind of how, you know he is going to be honest with you about it, you know he is not going to sit back and say, "Well, this is necessary in life." You have to know how to speak French or whatever your class is you go to go out and get through somehow. So he is just that kind of person. He'd be somebody to study.

This teacher demonstrates concern by providing a haven for students who seem to be resisting the very devices which have been instituted "for their own good". Again we see an instance where the same kind of language, the rhetoric of concern, is used to apply to two entirely different conditions. The generality of the rhetoric masks the very real differences in the perspectives of the speakers.

The rhetoric of concern is the basis for many evaluations of staff at West. Students attribute "failing" to a lack of teacher concern. Although the following comment does not specify what "caring" would entail, "caring" is clearly important in this student's view:

> I don't think he really cared. When people would say I'm flunking, he would say that is no concern of mine. I think he could have cared just a little bit more-maybe more of them would have passed.

Severe criticism is directed at those teachers who do not take a personal interest in their students. A black parent recounted her distress at West teachers who "just leave the students alone":

> No, they don't care what kind of work they do. They just leave them alone. They leave them alone and I guess they think that if they want to do it they will if they don't want to they won't. But I think that high school is kind of young to treat kids that way. You have to keep telling them and telling them.

The failure of teachers to stress repetition indicates for this woman that staff "just don't care". Several students echo this theme in their comments about teachers' pecuniary motivations. A typical interchange occurred in one of our interviews with ninth graders:

> R: Well, since you're not a teacher I can tell you, but some of the teachers around here just don't know what they are talking about. They just come here for the money, I think. I think they just come here and put in time and they don't care one way or another.
> I: You don't feel that teachers care about you?
> R: Oh, don't give me that, you know they don't care about me. Half of them just as soon come here and not have kids here at all. They don't care whether you learn or not.

It is sufficient for this student to tell us that teachers are only interested in money to demonstrate their lack of concern for students. No attempt is made to specify the dimensions of "caring".

We have attempted to demonstrate the extent to which a common language is shared by various sets of actors in describing the educational experience at Pawnee West. This language includes a formalized content that involves the notion of concern for students. However, the content of the speech acts is non-specific enough to apply to manifestly different situations. In the next section, we will explore the ideological basis that allows the rhetoric of concern to handle the "wide fan of meanings" used by these various actors.

The ideological foundations of concern

It is somewhat paradoxical that a rhetoric of concern dominates explanations of events in a social environment which emphasizes the necessity for limiting student activity. An important part of the reason for the predominance of the rhetoric of concern is that Pawnee West's publics are more ambivalent about control issues than about concern issues. The ideological foundations of the rhetoric of concern are almost uniformly accepted and taken for granted by most of West's audience and clientele. What we mean by ideology is the entire belief system held by a group. We argue that the rhetoric of concern is anchored in a body of beliefs so strongly believed that they are not examined, questioned or even recognized.

Ideologies, like social realtionships, often contain inconsistencies and contradictions for there is not an essential congruence between what people believe to be correct and what they do. As Turner notes (quoted in Moore, 1975:216):

> From the point of view of social dynamics a social system is not a harmonious configuration governed by mutually compatible and logically interrelated principles. It is rather a set of loosely integrated processes, with some patterned aspects, some persistencies of form, but controlled by discrepant principles of action expressed in rules of custom that are often situationally incompatible with one another. (Turner, 1967:196)

Therefore, actors who manifest inconsistencies are neither hypocritical or ineffective; rather the conflicting values and the variety of different perspectives afford the actors with differing modes of interpreting the ideology. The "scope of creativity" of a rhetoric is attractive because it allows "ideas to come and go quickly" without destroying the "entire ideology" (Parkin, 1975:116).

The most fundamental "truth" accepted at West (and in most educational institutions within the United States) is the belief that learning can change people and can be an effective instrument of "progress" and social good. At its root, this belief is based upon a strong faith in the mutability of individuals and the conviction that every student has the potential to grow and develop if guided along socially accepted paths. This belief figured importantly in the reaction of people in Pawnee to the desegregation plan: many people believe that we can learn from people of different races and, thereby, become "better". We heard many expressions of this faith but one of the most moving was a speech given by a pro-busing parent describing West's experiences to other parents facing a court-ordered desegregation program.

> This is a great opportunity for us to help improve the status of mankind. We have a chance right now to dissolve some of the racial tensions by teaching our children to accept their Spanish-speaking neighbor, their white neighbor, their black neighbor. We should diligently teach our children to try to understand them.

One variant of this theme at West was the statement made repeatedly that if students could be left alone, they would resolve the racial problems on their own. It was parents, outsiders, and unspecified "others" who complicated the issue.

> I: What could improve the busing program?
> R: They should leave the kids alone. The parents should educate themselves and examine our own values and not put it on their kids.

R: If the parents would have just left everything alone, I'd say everything would have gone along smoothly.
I: What did the parents do?
R: They are the ones who made the fuss. I'm not letting my kid go over there, and chained themselves to buses. They made all the trouble and then they made the kids aware of it.

The basic "goodness" of children is not questioned and lack of interference by adults will result in the most beneficial outcomes. It was widely accepted that students reflect their home environment and that the school can do little to affect the home significantly. Misbehavior is particularly attributed to home influence and is not connected with the school. The rhetoric of caring is most often expressed in relation to the student's home background. A school secretary summarized her frustration at dealing with one particularly difficult youngster by saying:

> I guess it just matters where they're from and how they are brought up.

One experienced teacher at West explained the problem in terms of the low socio-economic status of many of the Pawnee families.

> We don't have a socio-economic group. Pawnee has a mixture. We can't do anything for the community since the school is a chunk of the community. It's like making fish more wet. We are not well-to-do--rich. Pawnee is a working class town. It always has been.

For her, there is little that the school can do to counteract home influence on the students.

The rhetoric of concern is used to describe what is wrong with the home environments of many Pawnee West students. Parents do not "know what is going on up there" and, consequently, have little positive influence on the learning of their children.

> No, they don't know what grades their kids are getting. The only time they show up for school is if there is a problem and then it gets to the point where a child is expelled from school or something like that and they have to come and then they usually come in storming and screaming. People really just don't know what is going on up there and I think one of the reasons they want to get more people in the school is so they can find out what it is really like up there and many people have had their eyes opened. Oh gosh! I didn't know you did this, I didn't know you had that. You know they thought you couldn't walk down the hall without a club to protect yourself with or something. They just really don't know what it is really like up there.

Not only do these parents not "know what's going on". What is worse, these parents "don't care".

> They just don't give a darn. Once the kids reach high school, that's it. I've done my job. . . . And you find that in open-house, conferences, the Parents' Club--trying to get off the ground and everything. You get a couple of dozen interested parents and the rest--you know, they could care less. Let somebody else do it . . . .

Given this kind of home situation and the accepted inability of school to intervene in any effective way, the low academic performance of many students is accepted as a necessary outcome. The rhetoric of concern when applied to parents provides an acceptable explanation for students not learning which effectively excludes the contribution that Pawnee West makes to their education.

Another aspect of the ideology of concern which serves to deflect attention from Pawnee West is the focus on problems of individual students. Low motivation, poor achievement and serious behavior problems are traced to the particular characteristics of individual students. As one teacher sees it, the situation would be much improved if there were fewer "rotten apples".

> You know I think about [the kids here] like apples in a barrel. You can look in the barrel and see which apples are rotten. There are some that are not completely rotten--they could go either way. These are the ones you have to worry about. A farmer takes the rotten apples out of the barrel right away so they don't make more rotten. It's the same thing here. You know which kids are a problem and which are on the borderline. They take the bad kids out of the school for one semester and things are fine. Then the next semester they're right back again. No wonder there are problems.

But even these problems are accomodated under the ideology of concern: "If a kid is in trouble, all he needs is someone to talk to". The most serious difficulties can be removed if one person would simply talk to another and express a sincere interest. For example, to "solve" racial problems it was believed that one-to-one relationships based upon "caring" should be formed. As one mother reported:

> When busing began, parents. . . they got together all of a sudden and they became black or white. That's not where it's at. It's at the individual level.

However, even individual approaches are sometimes unsuccessful because the students do not bring the necessary commitment to the relationship. These students who "just don't care" are beyond "caring".

> Kids today are spoon fed. They are too dumb to learn. Some kids flunk out despite their parents. Sure parents get mad at them, but it makes no difference. Some have so many problems that school just gets lost among them. For many, though, they just don't care. They don't have to take any responsibility. If they don't want to [learn to read], that's their problem--not mine.

Yet there are still powerful social mechanisms affecting race relations at West. For example, those students who "crossed-over" often suffered ridicule, alienation and annoyance. By denying any structural or group mechanisms affect interaction, there can be no systematic approach to these issues and to the extent that the rhetoric of concern disguises structural mechanisms, it prevents positive approaches to change at Pawnee West.

The way in which the ideology of concern and its associated rhetoric disguises the importance of social structure at Pawnee West can be illustrated by comparing the reactions of staff to a "successful" and "unsuccessful" event. A corollary of the individual focus of the rhetoric of concern is that only a few students cause "trouble". Elaborate mechanisms are devised to "keep out the trouble makers". When their exclusion is not accomplished there are unfavorable consequences. For example, one staff member at West explained the violence that followed a girl's basketball game this way:

> Well, the girl's basketball game was open. By that I mean anyone could attend that game and therefore outsiders were allowed in and I'm certain that the kids that were involved did not attend the school. They could've been students with a grudge against the school for one reason or another and when open events, such as the girl's basketball game, are held, the chance for disruption is always likely.

An "open" event allows penetration of the "hard walls" by too many "trouble-makers". On contrast, "closed" events are more likely to be a "success".

> I: Why do you think the dance was such a success?
> R: Well, at the dance we didn't allow outsiders, the students who wanted to attend had to buy their tickets ahead of time and I'm sure that's why the dance was so successful. You heard about that basketball game the other night didn't you? Why, I think that was kids who have a grudge against the school and also it was that girl's basketball game--was an open game and that was definitely a mistake. You can see the comparison of the two, one was good and one was bad. The important thing is that outsiders were not allowed in. It's not the Pawnee kids who start these fights. I have noticed that the kids care. The kids care about what goes on here and they don't want fights or disrupters to interfere in their activities. The kids also believe if they keep their mouth closed, everything will be allright.

The rhetoric of concern is, then, one way to perceive control as "helping students" and enriching learning experiences.

We wish to repeat that the term "rhetoric" should not be interpreted as implying that the actors at West are hippocritical or insincere, for we observed many instances in which genuine concern was expressed in a variety of forms. It is the "taken for granted" dimension of concern that makes it almost impossible for participants at West to challenge existing arrangements. Concern is a part of the "folk myths" which enable actors to deal with the often contradictory, multiple realities that constitute Pawnee West (Edelman, 1977).

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Burke, Kenneth

Student lunch and the rhetoric of concern

The function of a rhetoric of concern in providing explanations for diverse features of life at the high school can be illustrated by one other noticeable application for this kind of language at Pawnee West. This application involves the absence of a school lunch program.

Students at Pawnee West attend homeroom and five straight classes with no break except the five minutes which are allowed for "passing". Without a doubt the long period between breakfast (if the student takes time to eat) and lunch when they return home sometime after one o'clock is a physical strain. Teachers report that students in their fourth and fifth hour classes have more difficulty concentrating because of their hunger. In one of the student produced films from Pawnee, this state of affairs is depicted humorously by having instruction interrupted repeatedly by the growling of student stomachs until finally all the students expire. The final shot has the camera panning over the bodies of the students slumped over their desks at which cardboard tombstones are displayed. One of the tombstones carries the message: "Died for lack of concern".

The various class projects that sell "snacks" during the school day provide some relief for those students who can afford to purchase the bagels, doughnuts or whatever else is vended. It is generally recognized that the nutritional value of this food is not high but the risks of providing a more substantial meal are too great. The unstructured "student time" which serving lunch would require provides too many opportunities for disruption. In other words, it is in the students' best interests to be hungry.

The rhetoric of concern is used to justify several features of the social environment of Pawnee West that are at issue around providing lunches

for students. First, the concern for the safety of students necessitates the management of time as a device for controlling student use of space. The large congregations of students inside the building would provide too great an opportunity for confrontations between student groups and possible violence. Second, the present system corresponds with student preferences. Since all students could not be served at the same time, the school day would have to be extended to allow for an "extra period". Students do prefer to be finished with classes at one o'clock although especially the younger students have some difficulty finding constructive things to do with their time after school. Third, the absence of lunch enables the building to operate more efficiently. The additional problems of student management that serving meals presents would require additional supervisory staff. This staff would either have to be hired in at an additional financial cost or borrowed from other duties forcing cut backs in the range of student services currently provided. Comments about the poor nutritional quality of the food now available to students are dismissed since "the kids would eat that junk anyway". The possibility of stimulating increased student interest in school activities by having them in the building longer must be subordinated to more pressing issue of providing for student safety. The educational advantage that students might gain from an additional hour of classes is dismissed because students who are interested in additional work may elect to take a sixth hour.

The use of the rhetoric of concern to justify the absence of a lunch program is an interesting example of the flexibility (the "wide fan of meanings") which the language of "caring" offers for dealing with school problems at Pawnee West. We do not suggest that the shape of the presently identified issue of building safety is unrealistic or that the protection of students inside West is not a problem that must be confronted. The experience of the aftermath of the girl's

basketball game described above seems to be an indication that the potential for violence still exists in West's community. But, informants tell us that substantially the same kind of language was used to justify resistance to abolishing the lunch program. What exactly constitutes "caring" at any particular time seems to be largely determined by situational factors. Arguments framed within the context of the rhetoric of concern are flexible enough to handle adequately both sides of a particular issue. Therefore, the specific implications of the rhetoric of concern for policy in the high school are unclear. "Caring for students" means many different things and provides little program-relevant information. The use of such language to discuss specific programs keeps the level of discourse too abstract to directly confront concrete elements that may be problematic in the programs. Although the rhetoric of concern seems to function effectively in defining areas of consensus among disparate elements in the West community of actors, the price of the consensus is a diminished ability to appraise the quality of the learning environment at the high school.

Rhetoric and desegregation

To summarize, then, fear and mistrust are two difficult problems which are associated with race relations at Pawnee West High School. The institutional response to fear is an emphasis on control and the basis of trust-building is the rhetoric of concern. Although these devices have been effective in their own domains, they have allowed little to be accomplished in the broader arena of urban education. Pawnee high schools are confronted with the criticism that they are not "meeting the needs" of substantial numbers of Pawnee students and the staff at Pawnee West are continually searching for more effective teaching techniques that will "reach out" to more of their students. Meanwhile increasingly large proportions of students are "dropping out" or "being pushed out" of the high school.

The view of desegregation as an accomplished fact at Pawnee West obscures the persistence of racial concerns in high school social interactions. People at the school are generally reluctant to talk about race. They will answer direct questions and occasionally volunteer a comment in connection with a specific topic. For example, most students know the race of the school symbolic student leaders and will offer an opinion about the appropriateness of the boy being black and the girl being white. But most often we are told that "people get along well now" so that there is no need to talk about the subject of race. This reluctance is understandable given the negative publicity which previous racial confrontations brought the school. Most participants believe that the notoriety was distorted and grossly unfair and wish to avoid a similar exerience. Avoidance of discussion of the issue of race relations, however, gives "talk about desegregation" a rhetorical quality.

Today, desegregation is ritualistically used to emphasize the ethnic diversity of the student body at Pawnee West and in Pawnee, an "All-American city".

Students of all races and cultural backgrounds are pictured as sharing a common educational future. "Caring" has triumphed over the destructive forces that opposed busing and a few short years ago threatened to rip Pawnee in two. Students of all races now find themselves in a stable educational environment that offers many unique learning opportunities, not the least of which is the experience of a multi-racial setting. In short, the people at West are proud of their record on desegregation: they have successfully accomplished "mixing black and white students" since "racial confrontations" are a thing of the past.

One result of the fact that rhetoric has come to surround desegregation is to effectively end concern with the problems of race at West. A black teacher disagrees with the rhetoric and questions how useful the effort to desegregate the schools has been:

> What its done, busing that is, is to have effectively taken the life out of us. There is no more fight left in us. No one cares anymore. It seems as though we have all just sort of accepted the fact and there's a trend not to oppose the voices that are against us. What you may not understand is that busing is a "tool". Busing has been used to not integrate or what they call desegregate us, but busing has served for even more segregation. . . . there was a time when white students were interested. They did want to find out about the life of black students and black people in general. Busing has been used to take that away. Busing brought out all the hostilities and its done much more than what I can say to you here today.

Black students describe their positive memories of "almost all-black" Junior High School. One student expresses his recollection in the familiar terms of the rhetoric of concern:

> It was almost all black back then and we had a good school. We worked together, we cared--the teachers cared. Everyone cared. But now I feel as though no one cares. I feel as though I could "drop dead" right in this spot and no one would care what happened to me!

For these students, much of this quality has been lost as a result of desegregation. As another student comments:

> There is all this talk about equality of educational opportunity but all I can say is that I've got a bus ride.

The "wide fan of messages" in the language of desegregation does not communicate to these black students who have been unable to recapture their "good feeling" about themselves and their school at Pawnee West.

The way people "talk about desegregation" involves a usually explicit comparison with the "violent" days of the past. We are repeatedly reminded that "things are a lot better than they used to be". There is a satisfaction among those people who remember those more turbulent times that does not necessarily reflect the important concerns of public education now. Staff at West recognise the limitations that the memory of the violent past imposes and they are trying to "ease up". One school official told us:

> Things have eased up. There aren't as many incidents that have to be dealt with. There isn't a crisis kind of atmosphere. . . . Now the climate has changed. Maybe safety is not as much of a problem. Therefore, maybe we can stay more open. Maybe we can do more kinds of things. . . .

But "easing up" on safety measures will not automatically allow the confrontation of the other difficult issues that surround the education of the youth at Pawnee West. What is the concern of school staff about how students spend their time outside school? What are the negative educational consequences of the pattern of avoidance that characterizes the reaction of many students to their learning experience at the high school? What part does West play in attacking the persistent problems of discrimination that are so much a part of minority group life in Pawnee? It is not so much that safety is less of an issue as these other concerns are becoming more of an issue and can no longer be relegated to a secondary position behind the protection of clientele.

Many people at West resent the emphasis which desegregation has placed upon "noticing what color a student is". They assure us that they are "color-blind" and dislike having to "worry about" how many whites or blacks are involved in a particular activity. Our observations tend to support the contention that many of the staff are not primarily concerned about the race of their students. However the conditions at West are such that consideration of race is important in providing equal educational opportunities to all West students. Our data reveal situations approaching "color blindness" taking place only when the students were so intently engaged in some common enterprise that they forgot about themselves. Bi-racial contact among students seems to be directly related to the degree of involvement that students have in academic work, athletics, clubs, "drugs" or social events. Many students have little involvement in any of these or other high school activities because of their fear of bi-racial contact. To the extent that "color blindness" prevents the school organization from "seeing" these students and providing them with alternative experiences that work to break down their pattern of fear, ignoring the race of a student may be a disservice to his/her education.

By treating desegregation as if it has been accomplished once and for all, the continuing racial problems at Pawnee West can be denied, avoided, minimized or categorized in such ways as to prevent them from being recognized, confronted and improved. Furthermore, racial tensions are forced "underground" and the violence that may be associated with these tensions in the students' minds is not perceived as any longer a serious issue. The concerns which many students have about violence become identified as isolated and individual problems and the student must deal with them as best he/she can, often by avoidance. Finally, a rhetoric has grown up around desegregation at Pawnee West which includes the statement made over and over again by students, parents, teachers and

administrators: students who have learned to cope with others who are different from themselves have learned an important social skill. The experience of attending a "desegregated school" is believed to give the students a "taste of real life" that more than compensates for any academic deficiency. One student explains it this way:

> In a school like ours with so many different people, you got to cope with people who are different. I think like that they finally realize that you got to cope with people in different ways. You can't treat everybody the same way and I think they have come to realize this in our school.

Our observations and discussions, however, convince us that this experience is not as wide spread at West as many believe it to be. Many of the social learning experiences of students are not consistent with the view that contact will lead to increased understanding and acceptance of different people.

Students are affected by desegregation differently. For example, some whites are isolated, afraid to venture into unknown places and reluctant to face new challenges. Some groups of black girls, on the other hand, appear to enjoy the new opportunities that are open to them at West, such as cheerleading, Homecoming contests, and club activities. The emphasis on athletic success at West has made it possible for some black males to receive recognition both inside the "hard walls" and outside in the community. But the black males not actively engaged in athletics or academic activities often try to bask in the reflected aura of the "brothers", unrealistically assuming that they too will be able to obtain social rewards without the hard work and disciplined participation required for these achievements. As a result, we found many unrealistic expectations among some of these students. In a varied student body responses to experiences will be different, and the same event can have powerful influences on different sets of actors. Yet, many would like to perceive the desegregated experience as a uniform, monolithic event with the same consequences for all.

One could argue further that West's experience is indicative of the desegregation controversy as a whole. The debate over busing has obscured the more complex issues of poverty, unemployment and economic discrimination that affect equality of opportunity just as efforts to preserve neighborhood schools from busing obscure the more difficult issues of residential segregation. To the degree that desegregation is viewed independently of such basics as learning, developing competence and fostering trust in school relationships, it becomes more rhetoric-like, giving the appearance of solution while leaving basic issues untouched.

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